AEGYPTIACA ROMANA. NILOTIC SCENES AND THE ROMAN VIEWS OF EGYPT

RELIGIONS IN THE GRAECO-ROMAN WORLD

EDITORS

R. VAN DEN BROEK H.J.W. DRIJVERS †
H.S. VERSNEL

VOLUME 144

AEGYPTIACA ROMANA. NILOTIC SCENES AND THE ROMAN VIEWS OF EGYPT

BY

M.J. VERSLUYS

BRILL
LEIDEN · BOSTON
2002

This series Religions in the Graeco-Roman World presents a forum for studies in the social and cultural function of religions in the Greek and the Roman world, dealing with pagan religions both in their own right and in their interaction with and influence on Christianity and Judaism during a lengthy period of fundamental change. Special attention will be given to the religious history of regions and cities which illustrate the practical workings of these processes.

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Versluys, M.J.
Aegyptiaca Romana : nilotic scenes and the Roman views of Egypt / by M.J. Versluys.
p. cm. — (Religions in the Graeco-Roman world, ISSN 0927-7633 ; v. 144)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 9004124403 (pbk. : alk. paper)
1. Rome—Civilization—Egyptian influences. 2. Rome—Antiquities. 3. Art, Egyptian—Rome. 4. Art, Roman—Egyptian influences. 5. Egypt—Religion—332 B.C.-640 A.D. 6. Rome—Religion. I. Title. II. Series.

DG 78. V47 2002
937—dc21 2002074404

Die Deutsche Bibliothek – CIP-Einheitsaufnahme

Versluys, M.J. :
Aegyptiaca Romana: Nilotic scenes and the Roman views of Egypt / by M.J. Versluys. – Leiden ; Boston ; Köln : Brill, 2002
(Religions in the Graeco-Roman world ; Vol. 144)
ISBN 90-04-12440-3

ISSN 0927-7633
ISBN 90 04 12440 3

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PRINTED IN THE NETHERLANDS

“Certes pour les hommes, les choses n’offrent qu’un nombre restreint de leurs innombrables attributs, à cause de la pauvreté de leurs sens. Elles sont colorées parce que nous avons des yeux; combien d’autres épithètes ne mériteraient-elles pas si nous avions des centaines de sens?”

Marcel Proust, *A la recherche du temps perdu.*
La fugitive (1925)

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PREFACE

This study is a slightly reworked and up-dated version of my 2001 dissertation defended at Leiden University. It was instigated by the stimulating teaching and research of P.G.P. Meyboom on the Nile mosaic of Palestrina. I sincerely thank him for his inspiring guidance and friendship and will always remember our strolls through the city of Rome.

I am grateful to H.S. Versnel and Brill Publishers for accepting this study as a volume in the series *Religions in the Graeco-Roman World.* Although this book is only partly involved with ancient religion, it critically comments on many of the volumes that have appeared in this series forerunner, the *Études Préliminaires aux Religions Orientales dans l'Empire Romain*, and for this reason the book found editorial approval.

Various funds and institutions made this research possible. First and foremost the Stichting Utopa; I warmly thank L. Dijkman for his enthousiasm and trust. Furthermore the Fundatie Vrijvrouwe van Renswoude te 's-Gravenhage, the Gratama Stichting, the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), the Dutch Institute in Rome and the Faculty of Archaeology of Leiden University. I thank them all sincerely for their indispensable support.

In the course of my research I have profited from the co-operation and experience of many colleagues, all gratefully acknowledged. Special thanks are due to J. Bintliff, L. Bricault, P.G.P. Meyboom, E.M. Moormann, R.A. Tybout and H.S. Versnel. Also the help of K. Fennema in correcting the English is acknowledged with gratitude.

Very important were the few people with whom I, over the years, could critically discuss my work and ideas. Some of them are included with the colleagues mentioned above, the others are my friends S. Braadbaart (†), H.J. de Jong and W.T. Pieterse.

My wife, Mascha Bevers, has been at my side all along which has not only been a great help but moreover a tremendous pleasure.

Amsterdam, june 2002

PART I
INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

"Die Archäologie ist im Grunde eine naive wissenschaft"[1]

This study investigates the meaning of Egyptian and egyptianising monuments and artefacts in Italy and other parts of the Imperium Romanum. The interaction between Rome and Egypt has been long, strong and diverse. The strong Roman influence on Egypt is evident in that process, especially after the country was annexed by Octavian in 30 BC. "Egypt now existed for the benefit of Rome" and that had far-reaching social, cultural and economic consequences[2]. The influence of Egypt on Rome is far less evident and univocal, and though specific aspects have been studied extensively, such as the economically important grain imports from Alexandria and the great popularity of the goddess Isis, no comprehensive overview exists. This study will not fill that lacuna but aims to provide aspects which so far have remained underexposed and to thereby adjust the standing of the overall picture. One group of artefacts is specifically focused on: the so-called Nilotic landscapes or Nilotic scenes.

The various aspects of the relations between Rome and Egypt will first briefly be described in this chapter. This will provide the reader with the historical background against which the remainder of the discussion will take place. Next a survey will be made of how the research tradition dealt with these aspects and what the present state of affairs is within the discipline. Which aspects have been dealt with extensively, which were not and what kind of consensus has been reached? From this 'Forschungsgeschichte' it will emerge why Nilotic scenes are such an appropriate subject for an extensive, in-depth study.

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[1] W.H. Schuchardt, *Adolf Furtwängler* (1956) 5: "Es ist für den Archäologen nicht ganz leicht, ein Thema aus seinem Fachgebiet zu wählen, das nicht unmittelbar mit der Aufzeigung und Auslegung von Monumenten verbunden ist. Er ist gewohnt, bei einem Gang durch Ausgrabungen und Ruinen, bei einer Führung durch Museen oder wenigstens an Hand von Bildern die Denkmäler selbst sprechen zu lassen. Er ist wenig geneigt, auf sich und seine Wissenschaft zu reflektieren. Die Archäologie ist im Grunde eine naive wissenschaft. (–)" Also used and cited in A.M. Snodgrass, *An archaeology of Greece. The present state and future scope of a discipline* (1987) 1.

[2] *Huzar 1988*, 380.

This genre will then be introduced and the different views on it will be discussed. And finally, when the historical background, the 'Forschungsgeschichte' and the most important notions have been introduced, the set-up and purpose of the research will be presented.

1 *The relations between Rome and Egypt*

This section aims to give a brief overview of the way in which Rome and Egypt came into contact, and to make an inventory of the concrete (material) outcome of this. For the purpose of description, the whole social spectrum has been divided into four general aspects which in reality of course always overlap: political, economic, religious and cultural. The emphasis will always be on the Roman side.

1.1 *Political aspects*

From historical sources we know of the existence of diplomatic contact between Italy and Egypt from the third century BC onwards. Between 215 and 210 BC, when Roman Italy was destroyed by Hannibal, the Romans request Ptolemy IV for grain. In the following decades however the roles will be reversed. Rome develops into a superpower in the eastern Mediterranean area and offers protection to an Egypt weakened by misgovernment of the Ptolemaic dynasty. From 168 BC onwards, when a Roman general on the orders of the Senate summoned Antiochus IV to leave Egypt in peace, the country has become in fact a Roman protectorate. In 164/163 BC, Ptolemy VI even flees to Rome. This situation continues to exist for more than a century: in name Egypt is independent, but in fact it is tributary to Rome. Romans make touristic and diplomatic visits to the country of the Nile, and heavily laden trading vessels set sail from Alexandria to Italy[3].

---

[3] For the relations between Italy and Ptolemaic Egypt cf. H. Heinen, Die politischen Beziehungen zwischen Rom und dem Ptolemäerreich von ihren Anfängen bis zum Tag von Eleusis (273-168 v.C.), *ANRW* I, 1 (1972) 633 ff.; *Fraser 1972* I; *Van 't Dack 1980*; E. Van 't Dack, Les relations entre l'Egypte ptolémaïque et l'Italie. Un aperçu des personnages revenant ou venant d'Alexandrie ou d'Egypte en Italie, in: *Egypt and the Hellenistic World. Proceedings of the international colloquium, Leuven, 1982* (1983) 383-406; *Sonnabend 1986*, 19-49; W. Huss, Die römisch-ptolemaïschen Beziehungen in der Zeit von 180 bis 116 v. Chr., in: *Roma e l'Egitto* I, 197-208 and *Meyboom 1995*, 164-166. *Van 't Dack 1980*, 6-10 and *Sonnabend 1986*, 19 n. 1 give a more extensive overview of the most important publications in this field.

From 49 BC onwards the political relations between the two countries change fundamentally. In that year C. Julius Caesar emerges victorious from the first triumvirate. His most important competitor Pompey flees to Egypt, where he is murdered upon arrival[4]. A few months later Caesar also arrives in Egypt. He has Pompey buried ceremoniously and gets actively involved in the battle for the throne which is then taking place between Ptolemy XIII and his sister Cleopatra. Caesar sides with Cleopatra, upon which the followers of Ptolemy XIII revolt. Caesar has set fire to the Egyptian fleet, which was hostile to him, in the harbour of Alexandria, and a large part of the city, perhaps including the famous library was consumed by flames. In the end the uprising was crushed. Thereafter Caesar, together with Cleopatra, devoted himself to looking around the country and visiting various places of interest. A son was born from their relationship: Caesarion. After spending almost a year in Egypt, Caesar returned to Italy. He confirmed his position of power and in September 46 BC he had Cleopatra brought to Rome. After the murder of Caesar in 44 BC, Cleopatra fled back to Egypt[5].

In Italy Mark Antony and Octavian come to the fore as the strong men. In their joint primary task, the consolidation of Roman authority, Mark Antony focused on the eastern Mediterranean area. For that purpose he also travelled to Egypt, where he met Cleopatra (again), had an affair with her and decided from Egypt, with her support, to deprive Octavian of his power. For ten years Mark Antony, as Osiris/Dionysos, remains at the side of the *nea Isis* in Egypt and the Near East. His struggle for power with Octavian, actually a Roman civil war, is presented by the latter as a battle of the traditional, male, good Italy against the degenerated, effeminate, evil East/Egypt, and in Italy a strong anti-Egyptian propaganda started up. In the battle near Actium in 31 BC, Mark Antony and Cleopatra suffer a crushing defeat. Both flee and in the end commit suicide;

---

[4] This 'treacherous' murder will later play a role in the Roman conceptualisation of Egypt, cf. Ch. V 3.

[5] For Cleopatra see H. Volkmann, *Kleopatra* (1958) and, most recently, M.A. Wes, *Diva Cleopatra. Historische en onhistorische verhalen* (2000); P. Southern, *Cleopatra* (2000), with earlier bibliography, and S. Walker (ed.), *Cleopatra of Egypt; from history to myth* (2001). Of special interest is M. Wyke, *Projecting the past. Ancient Rome, cinema and history* (1997) 73-109 ("Cleopatra: spectacles of seduction and conquest"). For specifically this episode cf. A. Aly Abdullatif, Cleopatra and Caesar at Alexandria and Rome, in: *Roma e l'Egitto* I, 47-61.

in 30 BC Egypt is added to the Empire as an imperial province[6]. Already for centuries the country had been governed directly by a god-pharaoh and it would have been difficult to add it to the Empire as a province governed by the Senate. In Egypt the Roman emperor was therefore regarded, worshipped and depicted as a pharaoh. Egypt kept this status as crown property during the entire imperial era; the economic interest of the country was of course also relevant here. Octavian appointed as his replacement a *praefectus Aegypti*, whom he chose from the order of the equites; senators were anyway not allowed to travel and stay in Egypt without permission. So, this important economical and political power remained securely in the hands of the imperial dynasty. Octavian was a charitable conqueror and spared Alexandria from destruction. He kept the Ptolemaic administrative machinery intact but did make sure it functioned effectively now. Greeks were replaced by Romans in political posts and also the economic power of the temples was heavily curtailed. Octavian, however, was not concerned with Egypt's interest but the interest of Rome and the emperor, to which Egypt had to contribute as much as she could[7]. The defeat of Mark Antony and the annexation of Egypt were important occasions for the Romans. In contemporary literature Octavian's victory is much enlarged upon[8]. Coins with the inscription *aegypto capta* were brought into circulation and Egyptian obelisks were transported to Rome, amongst other things to thus underline the Egyptian subordination to Rome[9].

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[6] Cf. *Zanker 1987* for illustrations of the anti-Egyptian propaganda. The significance for Octavian of the battle near Actium is extensively discussed in *Gurval 1995*, who modifies the great importance held by Zanker.

[7] Cf. *Huzar 1988*, in which Octavian's political intentions with respect to the conquered Egypt are analysed and S.A. Bari, Economic interests of Augustan Rome in Egypt, in: *Roma e l'Egitto* I, 69-76.

[8] Amongst others Horace, Propertius and Ovid refer to it extensively. The best example is perhaps Horace's Ode I, 37 in which the feeling among the Romans seems to be aptly expressed. See, in general, *Gurval 1995* and Ch. V 3, in which the ode concerned is cited and discussed.

[9] For the coins, made by an oriental workshop in 28 and 27 BC, cf. most extensively I. Becher, Der Isis- und Sarapiskult und die alexandrinische Münzprägung in augusteischer Zeit, in: P. Nagel (ed.), *Graeco-coptica. Griechen und Kopten im byzantinischen Ägypten* (1984) 45-54, 45-46 with n. 2; *Söldner 1999*, 110-111 with n. 70 and, more in general, *Bellen 1991*. For the function of coins as bearers of implicit and explicit social and political messages in general cf. now L. Kurke, *Coins, bodies, games and gold. The politics of meaning in Archaic Greece* (1999). A large number of obelisks was shipped off to Rome during the Octavian's principate. An illustrative example of the political charge around these monuments is the obelisk now

During imperial times nothing actually changed in the political balance of power. Alexandria did not always show total obedience in the transfer of taxes, and also the coexistence of the various population groups (Egyptians, Greeks, Jews and Romans) was not always smooth. From time to time and for various reasons Roman emperors visited the exotic country on the banks of the Nile: Vespasian (in AD 69), Hadrian (in AD 130/131), Septimius Severus (in AD 199-200) as well as Caracalla (in AD 215). Roman rule was not accepted without problems: in AD 115-117 a Jewish revolt occurred in Alexandria and in AD 175 another revolt took place[10]. After the foundation of Constantinople in AD 312 and the introduction of Christianity as state religion by Constantine, the role of the country as purely a province changed, which is partly due to the rapid

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adorning Piazza del Popolo. Originally from Heliopolis, from the period around 1300 BC, the obelisk is transported to Rome on a specially built ship and is officially erected in 10 BC on the spina of the Circus Maximus. The vessel was exhibited in a dock in Puteoli in order to keep the memory alive of this special occasion. The Augustan inscription on the base purposely made by the Romans underlines the message that this monument would like to disseminate: *imp. caesar. divi. f. / augustus. / pontifex. maximus. / imp.xii. cos.xi. trib.pot.xiv. / aegypto. in. potestatem. / populi. romani. redacta. / soli. donum. dedit* (*CIL* VI, 702) (Imperator Caesar Augustus, son of the divine high priest, dedicated this, when he was imperator for the twelfth time, consul for the eleventh time and tribune of the people for the fourteenth time, to the sun, after Egypt was brought in the power of the Roman population.), see *Iversen 1968*, 65-75.

[10] Cf. for the life in Egypt during this period, as it emerges from the tens of thousands of papyri which have been preserved, and the political events: N. Lewis, *Life in Egypt under Roman rule* (1983); *Bowman 1986*; *ANRW* part 10.1 (*Politische Geschichte. Provinzen und Randvölker. Afrika und Ägypten*, 1988) with specialised articles on various historical events, the Roman prefects, the role of the army, the economy, etc; R.S. Bagnall, B.W. Frier, *The demography of Roman Egypt* (1994), and R. Alston, *Soldier and society in Roman Egypt: a social history* (1995) (with an extensive bibliography). The question whether Egypt 'became Roman' or 'remained Egyptian' (discontinuity or continuity) has been the subject of discussion for a number of decades. In the past it was generally assumed that not much changed for the population with the arrival of yet another ruler, but this picture has been modified. Continuous factors were the existence based on agriculture and the social pattern tied up with it. However, the administration and the entire administrative apparatus, with the filling of the functions and the distribution of the land, changed. Cf. N. Lewis, The romanity of Roman Egypt: a growing consensus, in: *Atti del VIII congresso internazionale di papirologia (Napoli 1983)* III (1984) 1077-1084. For an introductory overview of archaeological remains from Roman Egypt cf. G. Grimm, *Kunst der Ptolemäer- und Römerzeit im Ägyptischen Museum Kairo* (1975); various articles in the volumes *Das römisch-byzantinische Ägypten* (G. Grimm, H. Heinen, E. Winter, 1983) and *Alessandria*, as well as D.M. Bailey, *Archaeological research in Roman Egypt* (1996) and, most recently, G. Hölbl, *Altägypten im Römischen Reich. Der römische Pharao und seine Tempel* (2000).

dispersion of Christianity; toward the end of the fourth century AD almost the whole of Egypt is Christian[11]. As in the millennia before, its own culture was not abandoned but flexibly adapted to the new circumstances. The river Nile, personified by the god Hapi in Pharaonic Egypt, and linked with Isis and Osiris during the Hellenistic and Roman periods, thus became one of the four rivers of paradise in the Christian era[12].

1.2 *Economic aspects*

We can only speak with certainty of direct, structural trade relations between Italy and Egypt from the third century BC onwards, when Alexandria and Syracuse are trading goods. Egyptian artefacts in fact appear already on the Italian peninsula from the ninth century BC, but in those cases they arrived there via intermediaries or incidentally[13]. The economic importance of Egypt was very clear to the Romans in the second century BC: in 140/139 BC a Roman delegation headed by Scipio Aemilianus travels in the Egyptian delta and on return reports to the Senate to have been impressed by the riches of the country and the huge economic potential if it would be ruled efficiently[14]. This economic importance only becomes stronger in the first century BC; with good reason Strabo notes that the trading vessels travel more heavily laden from Alexandria to Puteoli than back[15]. Rome's political domination saw to it that in this period the Romans could profit strongly in an economic sense, as aptly expressed by Rostovtzeff: "(–) the first century BC, during which she (Egypt) was exploited by her own kings, who in turn were robbed by the Roman politicans on whom they depended"[16]. Actually this situation is formalised after the conquest of Egypt in 30 BC, when the Roman emperor took the role of the pharaoh and the economic power of the temples was severely restricted. Efficient Roman government led to considerable economic growth[17]. After the long civil war, Octavian paid his soldiers with the treasures of the Ptolemaic kings and the grain transports from Alexandria in the following years provided for a large part of the food for Rome. His successors exploited the Egyptian riches in a similar manner. The presence of enough imperial grain for distribution to the *plebs* was important for the position of power of the emperor and Egypt provided this[18].

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[11] Cf. R.S. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late-Antiquity* (1993).

[12] Cf., in general, *Hermann 1959* and *Bonneau 1964*, 421 ff.

[13] Cf. also Ch. IV 1.1.1.

[14] Various classical authors mention this delegation, cf. H. Heinen, Die Tryphè des Ptolemaios VIII, Euergetes II. Beobachtungen zum ptolemaïschen Herrscherideal und zu einer römischen Gesandschaft in Ägypten (140/139 v.C.), in: *Althistorische Studien H. Bengtson zum 70. Geburtstag dargebracht* (1983) 116-128, and *Meyboom 1995*, 165.

[15] Strabo XVII 1, 7, cf. *Fraser 1972* I, 156.

[16] M. Rostovtzeff, *The social and economic history of the Roman Empire* (1926) 264.

1.3 *Religious aspects*

Among the eastern gods incorporated in the Roman pantheon, the Egyptian goddess Isis occupied an important place. She was very popular in the Roman world from the first century BC onwards. It concerns here no longer the old-Egyptian Isis and the functions and attributes belonging to her. The goddess had been amalgamated with other deities of the eastern Mediterranean area whose character was comparable and she thus became a syncretised Hellenistic goddess, as for example Isis-Tyche. In her turn, this Isis was associated with goddesses who had similar aspects: for instance Isis-Venus and Isis-Fortuna[19].

Actually not that much is known about the cult of the goddess in the Roman period[20]. Important information is supplied by Plutarch's *De Iside et Osiride* and book XI of the *Metamorphoses* by Apuleius[21]. Archaeological sources are the preserved remains of sanctuaries for Isis and a number of visual remains in which ceremonies in honour of Isis as well as adherents to the Egyptian gods are shown[22]. So far the remains of a dozen Isis sanctuaries have been found in Italy. The most important one was on the Campus Martius in Rome, but also in, for instance, Pompeii, Beneventum and Industria remains have survived of sanctuaries and their furnishings[23]. An important ceremony was the so-called *Navigium Isidis*. It was celebrated by the Romans on 5th March and constituted the beginning of the shipping season in the spring. The other important ceremony took place in November, the so-called *Inventio Osiridis*, when the finding and resurrection of the widely dispersed body parts of Osiris by Isis was celebrated[24]. After Isis succeeded in resurrecting Osiris, big celebrations commenced. This ritual symbolised the Nile flood and the consequent revival of vegetation. This occasion and the accompanying flood ceremonies hence also celebrated Isis and Osiris[25].

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[17] Cf. *Bowman 1986*, 40: "The stability brought by Roman rule was important in the sense that it depoliticised Egypt and created the condition for increase of economic activity."

[18] For these grain transports cf. G. Rickmann, *The corn supply of ancient Rome* (1980); A.J.B. Sirks, *Food for Rome: the legal structure of the transportation and processing of supplies for the imperial distributions in Rome and Constantinople* (1991), and E. Gabba (ed.), *Le ravitaillement en blé de Rome et des centres urbains des débuts de la République jusqu'au Haut Empire (Actes du colloque international 1991)* (1994).

[19] Cf., summarising, M. Malaise, Iside ellenistica, in: *Iside*, 86-95. See now also by the same author, Le problème de l'hellénisation d'Isis, in: *Bricault 2000*, 1-19.

[20] The most used syntheses are *Cumont 1929*; R.E. Witt, *Isis in the Graeco-Roman world* (1971); *Vidman 1981* and R. Turcan, *Les dieux orientaux dans le monde romain* (1989). See now also the (not annotated) general introduction by F. Dunand, *Isis. Mère des dieux* (2000). The literature on all kinds of aspects of the Isis cult is huge. Practical access is provided by Leclant's *IBIS* and the recent exhibition catalogue *Iside*.

[21] With regard to the Isis cult, both have been extensively studied by J. Gwyn Griffith: *Plutarch's De Iside et Osiride, edited with an introduction, translation and commentary* (1970) and, idem, *Apuleius of Madauros. The Isis-book (Metamorphoses, book XI), edited with an introduction, translation and commentary* (1975). See for Plutarch also *Alston 1996*, 103-104.

Iconographically Isis can be recognised in the Roman period in particular by the sun disc on her head, whether or not depicted as flanked by cowhorns or corn ears. She sometimes carries as attributes a rattle (*sistrum*), a horn of plenty (*cornucopiae*) or has a uraeus snake in her hand. Her himation often meets at the front in a knot between her breasts[26]. Figures surrounding the goddess are her husband Osiris or his Hellenistic form Sarapis, her child Horus (also called and represented as Harpocrates) and her servant Anubis.

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[22] Most striking are probably two paintings from Herculaneum, in which ceremonies in an Egyptian sanctuary are depicted (*Malaise 1972b*, 251-253 sv. Herculaneum 3/4); a relief from Ariccia, probably showing the acting out of the Nile flood in an Italian Isis sanctuary (K. Lembke, Ein Relief aus Ariccia und seine Geschichte, *RM* 101 (1994) 97-102, and *Versluys 1997*, 165-166); the so-called 'mensa bembina' (*Malaise 1972b*, 235-236 sv. Roma 442) and the columnae caelate of the Iseum Campense (*Lembke 1994*, 186-188 sv. D 3-6).

[23] For an extensive discussion of the sanctuaries for Egyptian gods in Italy cf. chapter IV 1.1.2.

[24] This was apparently such a characteristic event that the month of November is sometimes personified in Roman representations as an Isis bust or another characteristic feature. A mosaic from El Djem (3rd century AD, now in the museum of Sousse), for instance, shows a figurative calender in the form of illustrations of the seasons and months, in which November is depicted by a man dressed like Anubis and two other Isis priests, cf. *Yacoub 1995*, 124 with fig. 53a.

[25] See for both ceremonies, in general, R. Merkelbach, *Isisfeste in griechisch-römischer Zeit. Daten und Riten* (1963). For the myth of Isis and Osiris cf. Ch. III 4.4.1.

[26] The most sizeable collection of representations of Isis (364 items) can be found in the *LIMC* sv. Isis (V. Tran Tam Tinh).

Depictions of Osiris are rare in the Roman world[27]. Sarapis on the other hand appears much more often; he is usually depicted as an adult man in his prime with long hair hanging around his head and with a beard[28]. Horus has the head of a falcon; Harpocrates is easy to recognise by the typical ear lock and the finger which he often presses to his mouth[29]. Anubis, in Pharaonic Egypt one of the most important gods associated with death, can be recognised by his jackal or dog's head[30]. A cow depicted in the proximity of Isis denotes the goddess Hathor; a bull must be interpreted as the Apis bull, devoted to her. Also the Nile god, in Roman times portrayed as an older man with a naked torso, sometimes occurs in combination with Isis, as does the dwarf god Bes[31]. Other Egyptian gods than Isis therefore also played a role in the Roman pantheon[32].

Priests of the cult, appointed for life and not fulfilling another profession, had a shaven head and were dressed in linen[33]. Priestesses and female worshippers of the goddess can sometimes be recognised by the so-called Isis knot[34]. Followers of the Egyptian gods can be found in all social strata. It is a misconception that Isis and the Egyptian gods were particularly popular with slaves and females, as is often assumed[35].

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[27] Cf. *LIMC* sv. Osiris (G. Clerc, J. Leclant). More often occurring are representations of the god in the form of an Egyptian water jar covered with the god's head: Osiris-Kanopos.

[28] Cf. *LIMC* sv. Sarapis (G. Clerc, J. Leclant) with references to the various Sarapis corpora which appeared in the *EPRO*.

[29] Cf. *LIMC* sv. Horos (M.O. Jentel) and sv. Harpocrates (literally: child-Horus) (V. Tran Tam Tinh, B. Jaeger, S. Poulin). The mentioned gesture of Harpocrates underlines his being a child and is not, as was often thought earlier, a sign to be silent to be associated with the Isis mysteries.

[30] Cf. *LIMC* sv. Anubis (J. Leclant).

[31] All preserved representations of the Nile god were, most recently, collected in *Klementa 1993*. For Bes cf. *LIMC* sv. Bes (V. Tran Tam Tinh).

[32] For a complete overview with short introductions for each god cf. G. Hölbl, Andere Ägyptische Gottheiten, in: M.J. Vermaseren (ed.), *Die orientalischen Religionen im Römerreich* (1981) 156-192.

[33] Depictions of bald men are therefore often interpreted as Isis priests. Although without additional identification criteria such attributions always remain speculative to a certain extent, S. Wood (Isis, eggheads and Roman portraiture, *JARCE* 24 (1987) 123-141) has tried to prove that baldness, a phenomenon which the Romans generally regarded unfavourably, should be associated specifically with Egyptian priests and magistrates. Cf. for this issue and further references also the discussion of a marble portrait head of a bald man from the 3rd century AD in S.F. Schröder, *Museo del Prado. Catálogo de la escultura clásica.* I: *los retratos* (1993) 276-278 sv. 84. For statues of priests of Sarapis see H.R. Goette, *MDAIK* 45 (1989) 173-186.

[34] Representations of Isis and her female followers have been collected in J. Eingartner, *Isis und ihre Dienerinnen in der Kunst der römischen Kaiserzeit* (1991). See most recently for this type of statue the discussion of a seated 'Isis' of Tiberian-Claudian date in Stockholm by A.-M. Leander Touati, *Ancient sculptures in the Royal Museum. The eighteenth-century collection in Stockholm*, I (1998) 134-138 sv. no. 9.

The earliest sanctuary of an Egyptian deity on Italian soil known to us, a Serapeum in Puteoli, is as yet only known from a written record[36]. In the first century BC, there must also have been other cult places for Egyptian gods in Italy. There are various reports on persecutions in Rome of followers of the cults of Egyptian gods in the first century BC; from literary sources we know of in total five cases against followers and cult places of Isis. It is certain that the goddess acquired a public sanctuary on the Campus Martius in Rome between 20 and 10 BC. From that time onwards she is honoured by the emperor, like all gods in the Roman pantheon. Emperors such as Caligula, Nero, Hadrian, and Commodus are usually regarded as personally involved with the Egyptian cults. In Pompeii, the modest temple of Isis, perhaps already founded in the first century BC, was one of the first buildings to be totally restored after the earthquake of AD 62, thanks to a private donation. Domitian rebuilt the Iseum Campense after a devastating fire in AD 80 and restored the Isis sanctuary in Beneventum. Elsewhere in Italy there are also cult places for Egyptian gods in this period. There are innumerable occurrences throughout the Empire of small statues of Isis and her followers, as well as votive inscriptions and onomastic references to Egyptian gods[37]. Juvenal ridicules the followers of the Isis cult in his 6th satire[38]. In the third century AD there is a Serapeum on the Quirinal in Rome[39]. Together with the other Roman gods, Isis and the Egyptian gods disappear from the fourth century AD onwards. Essential characteristics of the mother goddess Isis can be traced in the Christian figure of Mary, but it is debatable whether we can speak here of a direct influence[40].

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[35] Cf., summarising and with further references, *Takács 1995*, 1-7 ("misconceptions").

[36] It concerns the so-called *lex parieti faciendo*, an inscription from 105 BC (CIL X, 1781), which mentions repairs in the area between the front of the Serapeum and the harbour. Cf. *Tran Tam Tinh 1972*, 3 ff., 58-62. Magna Graecia, especially Sicily, is considered a separate cultural area in this respect. The Egyptian cults are attested on Sicily since 200 BC, when there was already a Serapeum at Taormina. See, in general, G. Sfameni-Gasparro, *I culti orientali in Sicilia* (1973); G. Manganaro, Iside in Sicilia, in: *Iside*, 381 and, most recently, G. Sfameni-Gasparro, Les cultes isiaques en Sicile, in: *Bricault 2000*, 35-62.

[37] Cf. *Iside*, 141-142 (C. Ricci, Le epigrafi) and 151-159 (G. Sena Chiesa, Iside in età romana: le testimonianze dei materiali).

[38] Cf. Ch. V 3.1.3.

[39] For an extensive discussion of this monument cf. Ch. IV 2.4.1.

1.4 *Cultural aspects*

The political, economic and religious involvement of Egypt with Rome of course also implied cultural influence. Because of the relations with Ptolemaic Egypt, the Romans made contact, in particular from the second century BC, with a centuries old, high-standing and refined material culture, which made a great impression on them, as on all contemporaries. Some scholars therefore trace back a large and diverse number of themes and motifs in Roman art to Alexandrian examples; others take up a more moderate position in which in particular the autochthonous character of the Roman works of art is emphasised. This debate, which has been running for over a century now, is mainly fed by the fact that the relevant Alexandrian art has survived so fragmentarily that a reliable history of art is impossible to write, leaving room for all kinds of speculations[41]. Tybout investigated in this respect a number of iconographic and architectural motifs in Roman art, which are usually attributed to an Alexandrian source, and reached the conclusion that generally such a direct connection cannot be proven[42]. Although the confrontation of the Romans with Alexandrian material culture in the second century BC would certainly have left impressions, it infers that we should apply restraint in a direct reconstruction of this. More concrete indications can be found from the beginning of the first century BC, when unequivocal Egyptian elements and themes occur in Roman house decorations. For the Romans, Egypt was an exotic country at the other end of the world, as is shown in literary texts, and hence it attracted attention[43].

Egyptians living in Italy must have played a role in the adoption of aspects of the Egyptian material culture. Egyptians already lived in Rome in the second century BC; Ptolemy VI, who fled to Rome, for instance, stayed with a compatriot[44]. Their presence seems to increase sharply from the period around 75 BC onwards, when mention is made of soldiers and slaves, actors, musicians and fortune-tellers, but also of bankers and surgeons[45]. Rome is thus increasingly confronted with expressions of Egyptian (material) culture, through the trading vessels from Alexandria, the delegations from Egypt and the followers of the Isis cult. From September 46 BC until April 44 BC, the Ptolemaic queen Cleopatra resides in one of Caesar's villa's, outside the city walls on the other side of the Tiber. In the company of her consort Ptolemy XIV, her son and a large retinue, amongst whom eunuchs, valets, the philosopher Philostratos and the singer and musical virtuoso M. Tigellius Hermogenes, she keeps a royal court and receives members of the Roman aristocracy, amongst whom Cicero. In July 46 BC Caesar's victory in Egypt is celebrated, together with other successes, with a triumphal procession, during which many Egyptian exotics were shown to the people[46]. The political role of Egypt changes sharply in the period from 43 BC onwards, from friendly nation and vassal state to national enemy par excellence. Nevertheless, Egyptian and egyptianising subjects and motifs remain popular. In public life though the Egyptian gods come under fire, which is not surprising in a period when Cleopatra presents herself as the personification of Isis on earth.

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[40] See for this issue most recently L. Langener, *Isis lactans—Maria lactans: Untersuchungen zur koptischen Ikonographie* (1996).

[41] For an account of the various key players and viewpoints in this debate cf. R.A. Tybout, Alexandrijnse invloeden op de Romeinse kunst, *Hermeneus* 57 (1985) 173-187.

[42] *Tybout 1989*, 325-352 (Kapitel 9: Zur Herkunft einzelner Motive).

[43] Cf. Ch. V 3.1.1 for illustrations.

[44] It concerns here Demetrios, a *topographos*. Probably this term is meant to refer

With the conquest of Egypt, the contacts between Roman and Egyptian cultures seem to intensify. Egyptian and egyptianising subjects are notably popular in Rome and Italy in the last three decades of the first century BC. Tombs shaped like a pyramid, of which only the one belonging to the Roman praetor Cestius has survived, illustrate this[47]. Perhaps it is not exaggerating to speak of Egyptomania in this period, as De Vos does[48]. During the imperial

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in this case to a painter of landscapes with a topographical character. It is quite possible that this person should be associated with the introduction of this kind of painting in Italy. Cf. *Meyboom 1995*, V n. 32 and appendix 21. Cf. for Demetrios and other Egyptians living in Rome further Ch. V 2.4.

[45] Cf. *Fraser 1972* I, 800; *Malaise 1972b*, 317-318 and *De Vos 1980*, 78. It is still not clear to what extent we can speak of a permanent Italian presence in Alexandria in that period, cf. *Malaise 1972b*, 319-320 and the publication of a bust of a 'Roman' from Alexandria, probably to be dated around 50 BC, by H. Lauter, Ein Römerporträt in Alexandria, *RM* 102 (1995) 171-172.

[46] Now for the first time a hippopotamus is shown in Rome. Also carried in the procession were a statue of the Nile god and a model of the Pharos. See for this and Cleopatra's stay in Rome the literature mentioned o.c. n. 5.

[47] See for this tomb *Ridley 1992*. On such pyramid tombs, cf. Ch. IV 2.

[48] *De Vos 1980*. Her use of this term is sometimes objected to.

period there were a large number of Egyptians in Rome. The majority arrived in Italy as slaves and they therefore generally belonged to the lowest social strata of the population. Egyptians are mentioned and depicted as slaves, dancers, acrobats and actors, but also as philosophers and business men. Petronius' *Satyricon*, which mentions Egyptian painters, Aethiopian slaves and Alexandrian servants, aptly illustrates this[49].

2 *'Forschungsgeschichte' and present status quaestionis*

"*Cette (–) datation est lourde de conséquence car elle prouve que tout ce qui est alexandrin n'est pas necéssairement isiaque.*"[50]

2.1 *The character of the 19th and 20th century research tradition*

The presence of Egyptians and aspects of Egyptian culture in Italy from the first century BC was thus legion in all kinds of social spheres and among all social strata. If we review the scholary literature devoted to this from the end of the 19th century, it immediately strikes us that the Isis cult received the major part of the attention. The recent, voluminous exhibition catalogue *Iside. Il mito. Il mistero. La magia* (1997) with an equally sizeable bibliography, can serve as symbol of the huge interest in this goddess, which continues unabated. From Lafaye who was the first to present a synthesis in 1884 on the role of the Egyptian gods outside the motherland, the attention ran via Cumont, whose still famous standard work on the eastern religions among the Romans appeared in 1929, to Vermaseren. In the *EPRO* (*Études Préliminaires aux Religions Orientales dans l'Empire Romain*) series initiated by him, an attempt has been made to make all monuments and artefacts of the eastern cults in the Roman Empire accessible in the form of inventories; in the meantime more than 100 volumes have been published. The quantity of literature that has resulted from a century of research with respect to Isis and the Egyptian gods, has in the meantime become so immense that Leclant c.s. have been compiling a bibliographic inventory, *IBIS*, since 1972.

Concerning other aspects of the Egyptian presence in Italy, the situation is totally different. Both the political relations between the two countries and the economic relations have to manage with considerably less attention. This also applies to subjects ranked as cultural aspects in the description above, but the situation there is far less clear. Because of all the attention in scholarly debate for Isis from the end of the 19th century onwards, cultural aspects are generally considered as religious. Thus Egyptian and egyptianising motifs in house decorations, for example, are regarded as religious testimonials: the house concerned would have belonged to a follower of the cult of Isis. Likewise, Roman emperors who showed interest in an arbitrary aspect of Egyptian culture are regarded as personal followers of the Egyptian gods. And also, the find of a very small number of Isiaca is regarded as an indication that there was a temple for the Egyptian gods on that spot, to name but a few examples. It goes without saying that a reconstruction of the historical and archaeological decor has thus been created in which Isis plays a very dominant role.

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[49] Cf. Ch. V 3.1.3.

[50] *Malaise 1972a*, 218 in relation to the dating of the paintings of the so-called 'Aula Isiaca' in Rome in the Augustan period, cf. Ch. IV 2.6.1.

Egyptian and egyptianising artefacts found in Italy and the Roman world, the wider subject of this study, have always been viewed against this background and are therefore usually interpreted as religious, directly in connection with the cults of the Egyptian gods. The archaeological reconstruction is in that manner perhaps even stronger determined by Isis than the historical reconstruction. After all in the latter there are evidently also other, e.g. political and economic, factors involved that constitute the character of the overall picture. The meaning of artefacts is however usually far less evident, and especially when the context, or a careful study of it, is lacking, usually a large number of hypotheses is possible with regard to the meaning. The already existing, historical narrative then logically shows the way in the choice of one of these hypotheses. The first danger with such processes is that they reinforce themselves: new evidence will be fitted into the existing reconstruction and thus seems to verify it. For instance, when the find of a small statue of Isis in spot x has led to the reconstruction of a cult place for the goddess, then the find of such a small statue in spot y will be used to underpin the first reconstruction and to prove a second one: also in spot y was an Isis temple. Thus a generally accepted paradigm will soon come into being. By adding new material every time, a complex construction will form, based on the paradigm which in a sense will be hidden by all that new material. New theories and new material are thus added without ever testing the validity of the fundamental paradigm;

the second danger. For instance, nobody asks whether the find of a statue of Isis may automatically lead to the reconstruction of a cult place. And there lies the importance of 'Forschungsgeschichte'. By showing the premises, the points of departure within a specific field of research, and by examining them critically, it is possible to trace possible shortcomings in research which bases itself uncritically on these premises[51].

2.2 *The great interest in Isis further examined*

"Jede Zeit hat die Renaissance der Antike, die sie verdient."[52]

Before formulating how in the next chapters an attempt will be made to test the most important premise in the study of Aegyptiaca in the Roman Empire, it seems necessary to briefly deal with the origin of this point of departure. How did it happen that Isis acquired such an important, dominant role?

It is, of course, not illogical that the goddess, together with other Egyptian and eastern gods, received much attention when a scholar occupied himself with the relations between Italy and Egypt. After all much literary, epigraphic and archaeological material has been preserved concerning this goddess. The un-Romanness and mysteriousness of her cult and her manifestation would also have played a part: it is a fascinating subject of study. Illustrative also in that respect is that the recent exhibition mentioned bears the subtitle *il mito, il mistero, la magia.*

Since her rediscovery in the 16th century, the goddess Isis again attracted a certain popularity. For instance, the Freemasons through their preoccupation with the theme of initiation felt a bond with the goddess and her cult. In Mozart's opera 'Die Zauberflöte', which revolves around themes such as initiation and liberation, Isis and Osiris are thus prominently present[53]. The excavation of the sanctuary of Isis in Pompeii also played an important part. It was one of the first buildings to be excavated in Pompeii, and every European who visited Italy and Naples at the end of the 18th century also called at the sanctuary. A good illustration of the distortion of reality which arose from a combination of these factors, is the reconstruction of this Isis temple made by J.L. Desprez at the end of the 18th century (page 19)[54]. In reality it concerns a relatively modest sanctuary with a small podium temple in a courtyard, in the shadow of the adjacent theatre. However, the reconstruction by Desprez shows a grand temple terrain with a huge temple while the theatre is hardly visible. Moreover, not a simple sacrificial ceremony is taking place, but ecstatically dancing women are depicted, while a large number of different kinds of sacrificial animals are brought in. Most suggestive however is probably the representation of the sky. Mysterious clouds are gathering and give the spectacle an even more fascinating appearance. The picture aptly illustrates a number of stereotypes, such as 'licentious', 'copious', 'exotic' and 'mysterious', all apparently associated with the goddess. It also becomes clear how reality is coloured by these stereotypes. From this example, only one of many, one gets an impression of the special position of the goddess Isis in the European mind.

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[51] An illustrative example of this, in relation to Sol and oriental influences in the Roman world, is *Hijmans 1996.*

[52] From a lecture by Aby Warburg on Rembrandt, cited by E.H. Gombrich, *Aby Warburg. An intellectual biography* (2nd edition, 1986) 238; for Warburg cf. also Ch. III n. 225.

[53] For the Zauberflöte (and its Egyptian inspiration) cf. still A. Rosenberg, *Die Zauberflöte* (1964). For the possible influence of the visit by the young Mozart to Naples (Herculaneum paintings) and Pompeii (Isis temple) on the conception of this opera full of Egyptian elements cf. F.L. Bastet, Mozart in Pompeii, *Hermeneus* 51-4 (1979) 284-295 / *Het maansteenrif. Wandelingen door de antieke wereld* (1979) 138-159.

In Europe, again great interest in Egypt arose after Napoleon's expedition, in which Isis served as a kind of metaphor for the country of the Nile. The goddess became the mythical symbol of Pharaonic civilisation and the enigmatic country itself and was therefore put on the scene by, e.g., various French authors, such as Victor Hugo, Gustave Flaubert, and Alfred de Vigny[55]. All authors thereby create their own image of the goddess, as apart from the information supplied by Plutarch and Apuleius (see section 1.3), not much is known about the character and cult of Isis. With Flaubert and Barbey d'Aurevilly, for instance, Isis mainly serves as mystification

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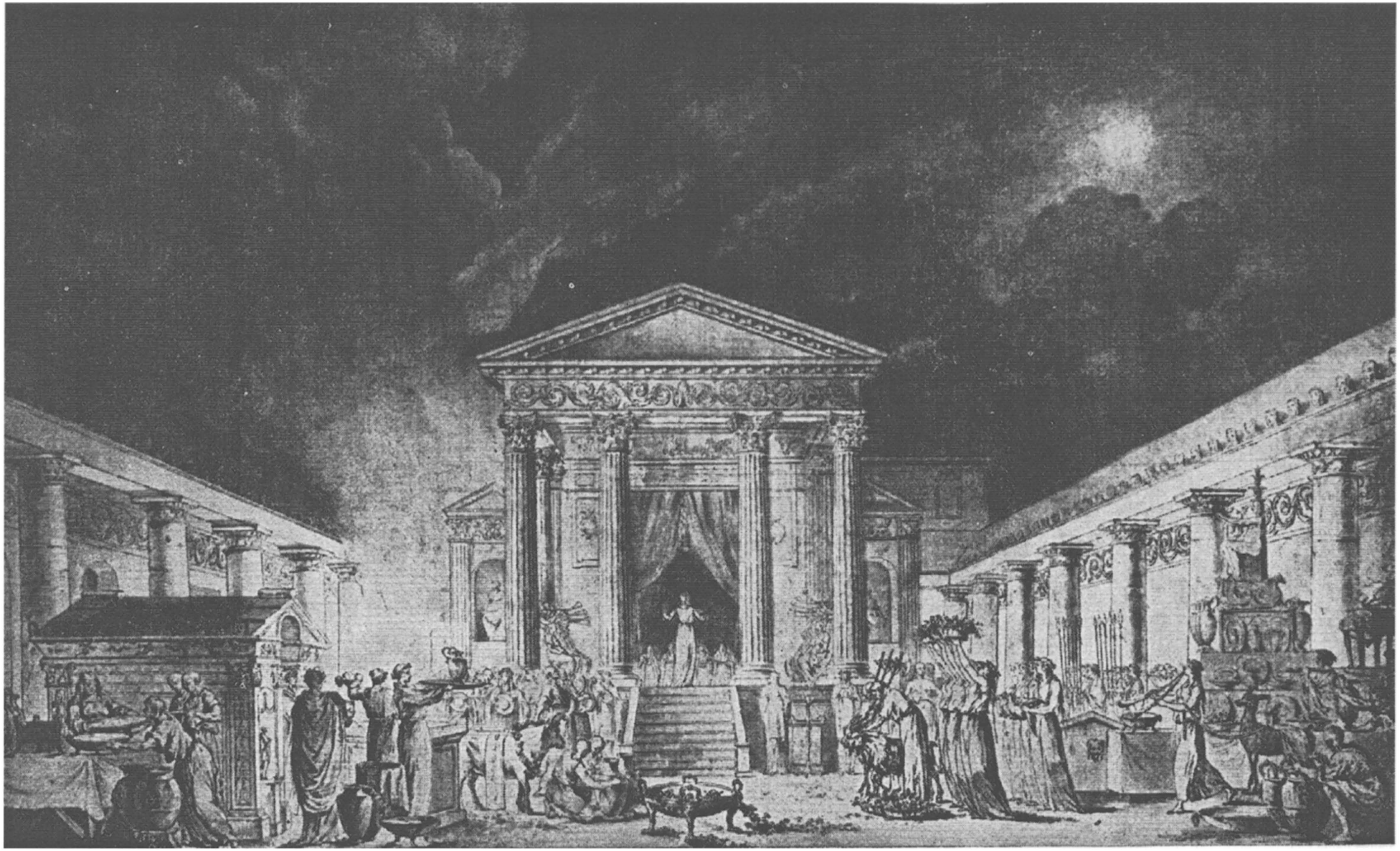
[54] This print was published in the travel account which was actually written by Vivant Denon, but published under the name of J-C. R. de Saint-Non (see, also in general, M.A. Dupuy (ed.), *Dominique-Vivant Denon. L'oeil de Napoléon* (exhibition catalogue, Louvre 1999), *Voyage pittoresque ou description du Royaume de Naples et de Sicilie* (1781-1786), and it acquired a certain reputation by the reproduction in E.C. Conte Corti, *Untergang und Auferstehung von Pompeji und Herculaneum* (1943) pl. 13.

[55] Cf. *Aubaude 1997*, n. 3 for references to literature on the role of Isis in the publications of the mentioned authors and others. For an overview of the Egyptian influence on European/French authors in general see *Starkey 1998*, Ch. VI: Literary interactions. Egyptian influence on European literature.



of the female body. With regard to the spiritual climate, room for such an interest, which was already rising before Napoleon's expedition, was created in France especially after the revolution of 1789: an interest in religions of past societies filled the vacated place of the church. Especially as a result of these two events the myth of Isis was regenerated. The French author Gérard de Nerval is probably the most notable example of an author for whom Isis played an important role and he will therefore be discussed in more detail[56]. He writes an essay on the Isis temple in Pompeii with an evocation of a religious ceremony; in the novel *Sylvie*, he starts off with an Isis-theophany; also in *Aurelia* a number of theophanies appear, while Isis is equated with Venus and Mary; and in the *Voyage en Orient*, he mentions his frantic efforts to have the Isis mysteries re-enacted at the foot of the pyramids in Giza. Nerval's fascination for the goddess can in particular be explained by a number of, very diverse, personal backgrounds: the Ex Oriente Lux notion—which formed an aspect in his education—can be associated with the goddess, as can the much more general strong fascination, also with Nerval, for Alexandria and Alexandrian culture. Furthermore, by means of Isis Nerval can extricate himself from Christianity, which he experiences as dogmatic, and moreover Napoleon, much admired by Nerval, has himself been associated with the goddess, via the great Osiris who even defeated death[57]. And finally, Isis fits in well with the pantheistic, syncretic religious perception which Nerval developed as an alternative to Christianity: "(–) Nerval surpasse le mythe d'Isis, le renouvelle par un travail d'écriture (–) pour se libérer de l'emprise de christianisme (–)"[58]. Throughout the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century, novels in the same vein were published, such as *Marius the Epicurean* by Walter Pater, in which the description of the *Navigium Isidis* ceremony plays a part, *Serapis* by George Ebers or Louis Couperus' *Antiek Toerisme*[59]. The mysterious

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[56] The role of Isis, and Egypt, in de Nerval's work have recently been studied by C. Aubaude in two publications: *Aubaude 1997* and, eadem, *Le voyage en Égypte de Gérard de Nerval* (1997). This part is to a large extent based on these two publications.

[57] This Egyptian association of Napoleon was also more general: at the French first night of the Zauberflöte in 1801, the spectators saw Napoleon in Sarastro, cf. *Aubaude 1997*, 198.

[58] *Aubaude 1997*, 251.

[59] Walter Pater, *Marius the Epicurian. His sensations and ideas* I/II (1895); G. Ebers, *Serapis. Historischer Roman* (10th edition, 1893); Louis Couperus, *Antiek toerisme* (1911).

Isis was therefore in vogue, which of course also influenced philologists, historians and archaeologists[60].

Historians and archaeologists in the second half of the 19th century saw in general the past as a reflection of their own existence as an elite in a male-dominated, bourgeois culture. They therefore constructed a significant past in which notions such as manliness, culture, politics, citizenship and rationality played a leading role. They, nevertheless, also looked for a place for opposite notions such as femininity, nature, corporality and irrationality[61]. The very feminine, sensual Isis, goddess of a mystery cult, was the perfect personification of this part of the past. Also for that reason she would have appeared so often in the reconstructions of historians and archaeologists. Stereotypes connected with this, as if the Isis cult would have met the needs of women, slaves and other members of the demimonde, continue far into the 20th century[62].

A contemporary explanation for the great interest in Isis is supplied by Tran Tam Tinh who observes that the spiritual influence of the east on the west is a phenomenon that is again visible in our society and that possibly against that background Isis receives so much attention[63].

Another possible contemporary explanation is suggested by the 'Forschungsgeschichte'. A large number of researchers, who in the

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[60] An overview of the occurrence of Isis in West European culture, from her rediscovery in the 16th century, testifies to this fascination and illustrates it. Cf. specifically J. Baltrusaitis, *La quête d'Isis. Essai sur la légende d'un mythe* (1967); chapters 8 to 12 of *Iside*, in which attention is given to the image of the goddess in the various modern time periods, as well as to Isis and astrology, Isis in theatre and music, etc.; and the recent overview article of J-M. Humbert, Les nouveaux mystères d'Isis, ou les avatars d'un mythe du XVIe au XXe siècle, in: *Bricault 2000*, 163-188. See also the literature on Egyptomania in general mentioned in Ch. V 1.3.1. Anselm Kiefer's 'Osiris and Isis' (1985-1987, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art) with Isis represented as an electronic keyboard at the top of a pyramid is the most recent example to my knowledge.

[61] This is asserted and illustrated by J.H. Blok, *The early Amazons. Modern and ancient perspectives on a persistent myth* (1995) in describing 19th century research into mythology. See also that publication for further general literature.

[62] Cf. *Takács 1995*, 1-5 and as an illustration the quotation by Vidman, which will be discussed in section 3 of this chapter.

[63] Cf. V. Tran Tam Tinh, Etat des études iconographiques relatives à Isis, Sérapis et Sunnaoi Theoi, *ANRW* 17.3 (1984) 1710-1730, 1711: "La quête d'Isis n'est elle pas peut-être l'écho lointain de l'attitude de l'homme ancien qui scrute l'indéfinissable avec ses théories gnostiques, hermétiques, avec les mystères et les rites extatiques afin d'apaiser sa soit spirituelle devant l'angoissant et l'éternel problème de l'homme face à l'Eternel."

20th century were engaged in the study of the role of the Egyptian gods and culture with the Romans, has an egyptological background. The fact that originally egyptologists were dealing with this aspect of the classical world will certainly play a part in the emphasising of the cultic aspect in the Roman context, because of the very dominant character of religion and gods in the Egyptian world and hence the remains of that world and the research tradition engaged in it. Summarising, it can be argued that in various periods and for various reasons Isis played a, relatively large, part in the European cultural and intellectual imagination and that for that reason the goddess and cultic aspects connected with her played a dominant role in ancient literary, epigraphic, historical and archaeological studies.

2.3 *Illustrative points of scholarly discussion*

In the remaining part of this section, some of the much debated subjects regarding aspects of the Egyptian influence in Italy will be indicated. On the one hand it is intended to complete the decor presented in the first section of this chapter and to further develop a few points; on the other hand it will illustrate the fascination of the research tradition for Isis and the distortion thereby created, as discussed earlier.

Much debated are the actions of the Senate in the first century BC against the followers and cult places of Isis. This was usually seen as a moral issue where traditional Rome was opposed to the introduction of a new and distrusted goddess. In reality these actions probably were mainly for political reasons[64]. Following the convincing argumentation of Tákacs, we can conclude that aspects of the Egyptian culture, amongst which the Isis cult, were present in the private sphere among all strata of the population in Rome in the first half of the first century BC. This is illustrated, amongst other things, by the so-called Iseum Metellinum, a small private sanctuary for the goddess built on the Caelius in Rome by a general of a Senatorial family[65].

The fact that there was a great difference in the Roman world between the public political sphere and the private sphere and that these two need not be logically connected, is shown by the conduct of Octavian. He did in fact not reject Isis and the Egyptian gods or Egyptian culture, as has often been asserted. A clear example is provided by a decision of Octavian in 28 BC in which he banned Egyptian *sacra* from within the pomerium, as is often mentioned in secondary literature, while at the same time he made preparations for the restoration of the temples of Egyptian gods, as is only seldomly noticed[66]. In this respect should also be mentioned the use of Egyptian motifs in the period during and after the struggle with Mark Antony: evidently they also belonged already to such an extent to the Roman repertoire that their original provenance no longer played a significant politico-ethical role. Most striking in this respect is the fact that Octavian's habitation on the Palatine showed uraeus snakes, so-called Isis crowns, a Nilotic landscape and other Egyptian motifs[67].

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[64] Cf. *Takács 1995*, 57-70 with a discussion, references to classical sources, all relevant literature and the correct emphasis on the power politics background.

[65] For a detailed discussion of this small shrine built by Metellus cf. Ch. IV 2.2.1.

Emperors, who are known to have had a relation with Egypt in whatever manner, are often characterised as Isis devotees. However, a critical examination of the available source material seems to suggest that none of the Roman emperors was personally a follower of Isis or was initiated into her mysteries. It can be said with certainty that Caligula was interested in Egypt, but that is all, in spite of Suetonius' mention of a nocturnal performance of a play set in the underworld performed by Egyptians and Ethiopians. Caligula's great interest in eastern affairs in general should probably be seen in the light of his admiration for and imitation of Alexander the Great. Also Nero is sometimes earmarked as a follower of Isis because of his un-Roman behaviour but there are no indications for this tendentious assumption, despite the fact that the stoic philosopher and priest Chaeremon of Alexandria took care of part of the education of the young emperor[68]. The Flavian emperors had a special bond with Isis but primarily this seems to have had a political background, not a religious one[69]. Hadrian's interest in Egypt would have had a more personal nature but that does not make him a follower of Egyptian cults. Indications for such a hypothesis are lacking in the Villa Hadriana. There are records that Commodus was involved with cults of Egyptian gods but his personal interest lay with Hercules. Septimius Severus' identification with Sarapis, primarily reconstructed on the basis of portraits of the emperor as this god, seems to have been rather political-ideological than religious. There are more indications for Caracalla, who had a large Serapeum built on the Quirinal in Rome, that he was a *philosarapis*. It seems to concern however Jupiter-Sarapis and not a preference for specifically Egyptian gods. It can be concluded that from the first century AD, Isis was a full member of the Roman pantheon, but is seems that there is no question of an 'Isissehnsucht' with one of the emperors[70].

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[66] Cassius Dio 53.2.4-5, cf. I. Becher, Augustus und der Kult der ägyptischen Götter, *Klio* 67 (1985) 61-64 and *Takács 1995*, 75-76. The assumption of *Lambrechts 1956*, 3 "Dat keizer Augustus de Egyptische godsdienst vijandig gezind was, is een algemeen erkend feit" seems therefore untenable in this moral sense.

[67] The presence of these motifs can probably partly also be explained by pointing at their meaning as victory symbols referring to Actium. For the Nile landscape in the Casa di Livia cf. cat. no. 017. For the so-called house of Augustus cf. G. Carettoni, La decorazione pittorica della Casa di Augusto sul Palatino, *RM* 90 (1983) 373-419; *De Vos 1980*, 60-64 sv. 24 and (in general) P.G.P. Meyboom, Wandelingen rond het huis van Augustus op de Palatijn te Rome, *Lampas* 34 (2001) 164-189; the Egyptian motifs are mainly located in room 15 ('cubicolo superiore').

[68] For Nero and Egypt in general see the book by M. Pia Cesaretti, *Nerone e*

In the interpretation of Egyptian and egyptianising monuments and artefacts in Italy, the tendency to give Isis a place in the interpretation is almost even stronger, as is evidenced by the many different theories about the so-called Canopus in Hadrian's villa near Tivoli. All kinds of statues were placed along the water garden, amongst which a number of egyptianising ones. The semi-circular

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l'Egitto. Messagio politico e continuità culturale (1989). For Chaeremon cf. also Ch. V 2.4.

[69] See, in detail, S. Adamo Muscettola, I Flavi tra Iside e Cibele, in: *Adamo Muscettola/De Caro 1994*, 83-118, however with different conclusions.

[70] I deal to briefly with this complicated matter to fully underpin my conclusions. For an overview of all emperors from the Iulio-Claudian house to Severus Alexander in relation to their involvement with Egyptian gods, cf. *Lambrechts 1956* and idem, La politique religieuse des empereurs romains. Leur attitude envers les cultes égyptiens et phrygiens, *Le nouvelle Clio* 10-12 (1958-1962) 243-244; *Takács 1995*, 75-119, and A. Grimm, Iside imperiale. Aspetti storico-culturali del culto isiaco al tempo degli imperatori romani, in: *Iside*, 120-133. Lambrechts proposes a different reconstruction. His view of the Egyptian (religious) influence on Rome is very negative, as can be shown in a revealing quotation in his publication of 1956, 8: "Vooreerst dient opgemerkt dat reeds van in een hoog verleden zowel Grieken als Romeinen met een atavistisch gevoel van haat en minachting waren bezield voor alles wat Egyptisch was". It is therefore not surprising that the emperors traditionally regarded as bad, such as Caligula and Nero, are seen as followers of the Egyptian gods and disciples of the Egyptian cults. Takács seems to a large extent to agree with my conclusion. Grimm presents a reconstruction in which emperors such as Nero and Vespasian are regarded as egyptophile, which contradicts therefore to a large extent the overview given here. Cf. also V. Tran Tam Tinh, Les empereurs romains versus Isis, Sérapis, in: A. Small (ed.), *Subject and ruler: the cult of the ruling power in classical antiquity* (1996) 215-230.

structure at the far end of the Canopus has been called Serapeum since the 18th century, as it was thought that the Serapeum of Alexandria was copied here. The complex, however, can be totally flooded and has a large number of niches where statues would have been placed. We are therefore dealing with a large nymphaeum cum triclinium and not a sanctuary or, as has also been assumed, the tomb of Antinoüs. The French egyptologist Grenier has attempted to reconstruct the collection of statues in this nymphaeum. Of the approximately 250 statues, which can be said with reasonable certainty to originate from the Villa Hadriana, some 40 share an Egyptian character. A difficult problem is that for the major part of this decoration the exact findspot within the Villa Hadriana is unknown: very little has survived in situ. The erudite reconstruction by Grenier can be briefly summarised as follows: the Serapeum would represent a monumental map of Egypt, from the source of the Nile flood in Bigeh, via Memphis and Upper Egypt to Canopus and Lower Egypt. The focus is on the element of regeneration. This is expressed by the water of the Nile flood, as well as by the many statues of (Osiris)Antinoüs. Furthermore, the arrangement of the various egyptianising statues would have been based on an Egyptian ritual. The problem with this interpretation is the lack of certainty about the original location of the statues; a meaningful arrangement could also be devised with the other 20 Egyptian statues found in the villa, or a different combination. Besides, it is known that a number of the statues used by Grenier were certainly not found near the Serapeum (for instance, the gigantic head of Isis-Demeter which Grenier places in the central recess at the far end), and at times the French scholar rather stretches the prevailing interpretation of the statues in order to fit them into his scheme[71]. For the time being a religious/topographical interpretation cannot be sufficiently underpinned, but it will of course remain a hypothesis. Perhaps it is rather a question of the creation of an Egyptian ambience in a more general sense, in which for understandable reasons Antinoüs played a key role. Grenier's reconstruction, with an abundance of Egyptian religious details as argumentation, illustrates that this cultural interpretation of the complex as hypothesis is apparently not obvious: the occurrence of

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[71] For a more extensive critique of Grenier see E. Salza Prina Ricotti, Adriano: architettura delle verde e dell'aqua, in: *Horti Romani*, 363-399, 380-382.

Aegyptiaca in an Italian context has to be explained in connection with Egyptian religion[72].

The four examples here briefly indicated (the actions of the Senate in the first century BC, the attitude of Octavian towards the Egyptian gods and cults, the attitude of other Roman emperors in this respect, and the Villa Hadriana), show how great is the modern preoccupation with Isis and the thereby supposed religious aspects. It has not been attempted here to refute these interpretations in detail; what has been endeavoured is to introduce a different way of thinking and to illustrate the possible plausibility of it.

3 *Nilotic landscapes: unused source material*

"*Sullas Zeit muss dem Ägyptischen Kult sehr günstig gewesen sein, wenn wir Apuleius' Angabe Glauben schenken können, dass das ehewürdige Kollegium der Pastophoren in Rom zu jener Zeit gegründet worden ist, und vor allem wenn wir die herrlichen Mosaiken mit Nillandschaft in Praeneste, dem heutigen Palestrina, in Betracht ziehen, die wahrscheinlich aus dieser Epoche stammen. In den Rahmen dieser bewegten Epoche mit den entfesselten Leidenschaften des einfachen Volkes könnte es gut passen.*"[73]

There does exist a vast literature on the different aspects of the relations between Rome and Egypt, especially concerning the Egyptian gods in the Roman world, and at first sight it seems surprising that no comprehensive studies have been devoted to the genre of Nilotic landscapes or Nilotic scenes. Nilotic scenes are images of the flooded river Nile and the country of Egypt in the Roman world.

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[72] Cf. *Grenier 1989* with all relevant preceding literature. A more general cultural interpretation of the Canopus complex can already be found in *Malaise 1972a*, 101-108 sv. Villa Hadriana, documentation archéologique A: Le Canope ("nous croirions volontiers que le canope de la Villa Hadriana matérialisait aux yeux de l'empereur le triple attrait religieux, culturel et 'touristique' que l'Égypte exerçait sur lui.", 103-104) and B. Adembri, Iside a Tivoli, in: *Iside*, 326-331, in which the commemorative Antinoüs aspect, also put forward by Grenier, is emphasised. In a critical examination of Grenier's theory, the publication by J. Raeder, *Die statuarische Ausstattung der Villa Hadriana bei Tivoli* (1983), with a reliable, critical catalogue of the statues that can be ascribed to the villa, is indispensable. The most extensive and convincing argument for a general cultural interpretation can be found in the recent overview by *MacDonald/Pinto 1995* (108-116, 141-151 specifically for the statues). See, also for the complex in general, most recently E. Salza Prina Ricotti, *Villa Adriana. Il sogno di un imperatore* (2001).

[73] L. Vidman, Isis und Sarapis, in: M.J. Vermaseren (ed.), *Die orientalischen Religionen im Römerreich* (1981) 121-156, 133-134.

As will become clear later, Nilotic scenes were popular in all parts of the Roman Empire and they occur, in diverse forms and of diverse qualities, from the second century BC until the sixth century AD in many different contexts. It can thus be concluded that they are pre-eminently testimonies to the relations between Rome and Egypt, and the relatively modest attention they have received seems explainable only from the 'Forschungsgeschichte' as described earlier. Only sometimes do Nilotic scenes seem clearly religious and hence are included in the literature concerning Isis and the Egyptian gods. They can rarely be connected with politics and their presence can hardly ever be explained directly from an economic meaning. The material is thus made subordinate to the research tradition, and as Nilotic landscapes did not fit into the concepts created by this research tradition, the information which they supply about the relations between Rome and Egypt is hardly used. The quotation from Vidman shows how Nilotic scenes, if they are at all supplied as sources of information, are moreover automatically connected with the Isis cult. This quotation is illuminating, precisely because it expresses in two sentences two important stereotypes, already developed in the 19th century, with regard to aspects of the Egyptian culture in Italy. Firstly, the view that civilised Romans could never change to worshipping such an un-Roman (= eastern = uncivilised) goddess. This must have been the influence of the lower classes and then only in a crisis situation[74]. Secondly, the conviction that Egyptian and egyptianising monuments and artefacts in Italy are as a matter-of-course to be connected with the Egyptian gods.

Against this background, a comprehensive and preferably as exhaustive as possible study of this so far unused source of information seems worthwhile. Based on the new information thus generated, together with the data already known, but which should first be critically re-examined, it will perhaps be necessary to look at the relations between Rome and Egypt from a changed point of view.

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[74] Cf. *Takács 1995*, 30 and, in general, *Hijmans 1996*. See for an explicit expression of this once more general conviction *Lambrechts 1956*, 7: "Maar ook mag men als zeker aannnemen dat veel Romeinen zich tot de Egyptische goden bekeerden. Zulks geldt voor de vrouwen (en liefst die welke tot het weinig aanbevelenswaardig wereldje van de toenmalige demi-monde behoorden) maar ook heel wat mannen blijken aanhangers van die exotische godsdienst te zijn geweest. Isis en Serapis recruteerden hun aanhangers in de onderste lagen der maatschappij: over de morele standing van deze mensen valt niet veel goeds te vertellen."

3.1 *Definition*

Nilotic scenes or Nilotic landscapes can be defined as images of the (flooded) Nile and the banks of the river with the flora, fauna, structures and activities of the population. The existence of a genre of this kind of images, which will be reviewed later in all possible manifestations, seems evident but that certainly is not the case. So far the representations concerned have been interpreted as, for instance, depictions of Egypt, scenes with dwarves and pygmies, erotic scenes or waterscapes. That we are dealing in all cases with flood scenes, or at least with images connected with them, can be concluded on the basis of a thorough iconographic and iconological analysis of a complete as possible corpus of preserved Nilotic scenes.

3.2 *Status quaestionis*

In the following overview, the most important and most often occurring interpretations of Nilotic scenes in the past century will be reviewed in more or less chronological order. On this basis it will be attempted to identify possible shortcomings in the research to date with the aim of formulating the correct research questions with respect to the material in the concluding section[75].

Rostovtzeff regarded Nilotic scenes mainly as exotic decoration, comparable to the chinoiserie in European art[76]. Blake assumed that Nilotic scenes originated from the Hellenistic East and arrived in the West together with mosaic art[77]. Maiuri is one of the first to give a reasonably extensive list with references and parallels in his discussion of the Nilotic landscape in the house of P.C. Tages in Pompeii[78]. A first general interpretation of egyptianising scenes, amongst them Nilotic scenes, was given by Schefold in his publications on Roman wall-painting[79]. He ascribes a religious meaning to the Nilotic landscapes; sometimes a direct one, sometimes an indirect one. Nilotic scenes are classified in the category "Isis und Verwandtes" and for Schefold they are "Beispiele der Erhöhung des Lebens". The occurrence of the genre in a not directly religious context, such as a house, can thus be explained and therefore only shows "wie allgemein man damals mit Symbolen des Isiscultus schaltete". Foucher was the first to collect and interpret Nilotic scenes from a specific part of the Roman world in presenting an overview of the North African Nilotic scenes, all mosaics[80]. In comparison with a number of Italian examples, Foucher sees in the African Nilotic scenes much attention to create an idyllic ambiance "à la glorification du Nil". Nilotic landscapes, at least the African examples of the genre, would therefore refer to the Nile god with religious intentions. Foucher further assumes that the repertoire derived from Alexandrian artists, and that originally Nilotic scenes were large wall-filling representations from which separate elements were later extracted. In the same period, Adriani observes that the popularity of Nilotic scenes in Rome probably arose from the well-known image of the Nile god in the Musei Vaticani, with a Nilotic scene on its base[81]. Lavin made a similar link with the Nile god in a monograph on the hunting mosaics of Antioch: "it is possible that the Nilotic mosaics were a factor in the development of the cosmographic element (–); the Nile played an important part in Alexandrian cosmological speculation"[82]. In an article by Alföldi, in interpretation comparable to Schefold but without his nuances, the genre is defined concisely as "Kirchenkunst" of the Isis cult[83]. In 1973/74 at the university of Trieste a doctoral thesis was submitted with the title *Scene nilotiche in mosaici romani*, which remained however unpublished[84]. Among the glass mosaic panels found in Kenchreai, extensively published by Ibrahim, is a large number of marsh scenes with a Nilotic character[85]. Other Nilotic landscapes are advanced as parallels but unfortunately the author does not express an opinion on the meaning of the genre on the basis of the overview. In the concluding interpretation, the Kenchreai panels are linked with the Isis cult. Many comments on Pompeian Nilotic scenes can be found in an article by Whitehouse, in which the painted Nilotic landscape on the walls of the triclinium in the so-called *praedia* of Julia Felix in Pompeii is reconstructed and discussed[86]. Whitehouse observes that this wall-filling representation is an exception, as a rule Nilotic scenes occur in a more subordinate role as small panels on walls. Pompeian Nilotic scenes generally date from the reconstruction phase of Pompeii (after the earthquake of AD 62), and would mainly occur in rooms associated with water. On the basis of these observations she also remarks on the function of the genre, in which a compromise is made between the religious and exotic interpretation: "in some cases the choice (–) may have been determined by more than the fashion of the day". This would have been the case with the painting discussed and its presence should be explained against a religious background. The occurrence of Egyptian scenes in gardens in general is explained as "a desire to create a pleasant and relaxing ambience". In 1979 Whitehouse submitted a Ph.D. thesis at Oxford University titled *A catalogue of nilotic landscapes in Roman art*[87]. Nilotic landscapes also appear, as part of the furnishing and decoration of gardens, in the article by Zanker on the interpretation of the furnishing and decoration of the Pompeian house[88]. He concludes that often the same themes occur in the decoration of the walls in gardens and that they can be associated with each other. Three categories can be distinguished: garden paintings, landscape paintings with a view of water and villae, and a third category with *paradeisoi*, sacral landscapes and Nile landscapes. In particular the Nilotic scenes are associated with the artificially constructed canal not unusual in Pompeiian gardens and called a *nilus* or *euripus*. Zanker infers a function as "Hinweise auf berühmte, glückliche und für sorglosen Lebensgenuss bekannte Landschaften zu steigern". In a collection of essays dedicated to Adriani in 1984, another two overviews are presented of Nilotic scenes from a part of the Roman Empire. Leclant treats the examples of the genre in Gallia as an aspect of the Alexandrian influences there[89]. He observes that the Nilotic scenes testify to interest in Egypt and the Egyptian civilisation but concludes, after studying a number of parallels from other parts of the Roman world, that they often have a religious character. Balty discusses Nilotic scenes preserved in the Near East[90]. Man profiting from the flora and fauna is generally depicted on these mosaics. Balty concludes that the images could have an underlying meaning but that this often is not the case. In his inventory of Italian Aegyptiaca, Malaise was one of the first and few who in some cases was reluctant to give a religious interpretation to Aegyptiaca Romana in favour of a general cultural influence[91]. His view on Nilotic scenes in an overview article from 1984 makes clear that he does not regard them in principle as religious, though this aspect may perhaps play a role: "(–) les scènes nilotiques et les paysages alexandrines ne sont peut-être pas a écarter totalement de l'univers religieux, bien qu'ils soient surtout des témoins de la mode alexandrine"[92]. Grimal, in his publication on Roman gardens, regards Nilotic scenes as *topia*. He points to a number of set elements in the representations, which he sees as indications of Egypt: "Pour les Romains, cela résume toute l'Égypte"[93]. In her article on a remarkable Nilotic emblema from Tivoli, Whitehouse makes some stylistic remarks on the genre[94]. She places the popularity of Nilotic landscapes with dwarves in the last two decades before AD 79 and sees a continuation of this pictorial tradition in the black and white mosaics from the second and third century AD, "albeit in a transformal state characterized by the loosening of the pictorial scheme and the misrepresentation of stock-motifs". Nilotic scenes are also put forward as example in a discussion by De Loos-Dietz of the motif of a waterbird grabbing a snake, and the author remarks: "nous pouvons même nous demander si des paysages nilotiques n'ont pas toujours une signification apotropaïque"[95]. A similar interpre-

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[75] In many publications in which Nilotic scenes are dealt with, a number of different examples and their relevant literature are put forward as parallel. A real overview of the various opinions with a large number of examples from all parts of the Roman world from various periods is only given in *Kenchreai*, 120-141. In fact this is so far still the best general introduction to the genre, which however unfortunately lacks a synthesis and a conclusion.

[76] *Rostovtzeff 1911*, 71.

[77] M.E. Blake, Mosaics of the late Empire in Rome and vicinity, *MAAR* 17 (1940) 81-130, 119-120.

[78] Cf. cat. no. 035; A. Maiuri, *Le pitture delle casa di 'M. Fabius Amando' del 'Sacerdos Amendus' e di P.C. Teges (Reg. I,7)* (Monumenti della Pittura Antica, Pompeii II) (1938), 26 n. 1.

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[79] *Pompejanische Malerei. Sinn und Ideengeschichte* (1952); *Schefold 1957* and *Vergessenes Pompeji* (1962).

[80] *Foucher 1965*. Egypt is not included here.

[81] Cf. cat. no. 015; A. Adriani, *Repertorio d'arte dell'Egitto greco-romano*, Series A, II (1961) 55.

[82] I. Lavin, *The hunting mosaics of Antioch and their sources* (1963) 225, 273.

[83] A. Alföldi, Die alexandrinischen Götter und die Vota Publica, *JAC* 8-9 (1965-1966) 53-87, 62.

[84] Non vidi. P. Fiametti, *Scene nilotiche in mosaici romani* (unpublished ms., 1973/74). Only *Tammisto 1997* uses this work.

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[85] Cf. cat. no. 117; *Kenchreai*.

[86] Cf. cat. no. 038; *Whitehouse 1977*, 64-66 for the quotations.

[87] Non vidi. *Whitehouse 1985* announces a book on Nilotic landscapes in Roman art, which has not been published so far. Only *LIMC* sv. pygmaioi (V. Dasen) uses Whitehouse's catalogue.

[88] *Zanker 1979*, 510 for the quotation. For the subject see now also *Zanker 1995*.

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[89] *Leclant 1984a.* He also discusses the occurrence of separate Nilotic elements such as dwarves and crododiles on pottery and coins.

[90] *Balty 1984.*

[91] *Malaise 1972a.*

[92] *Malaise 1984*, 1627.

[93] *Grimal 1984*, 317-318.

[94] *Whitehouse 1985*, 134 for the quotation.

[95] E.P. de Loos-Dietz, Un échassier avec un serpent, *BABesch* 66 (1991) 133-

tation of the genre is suggested by a number of Italian archaeologists in a publication on the so-called 'isola sacra' near Ostia, in a discussion of a mosaic with Nilotic elements in the forecourt of tomb 16: "In contesti funerari, queste raffigurazioni starebbero a rappresentare la lotta contro l'elemento antidionisiaco"[96]. In her monograph on statues of rivergods, Klementa remarks on statues of the Nile god: "Somit müssen schon seit hellenistischer Zeit dem Nil Attribute beigegeben worden sein, die man mit Ägypten assoziierte und die kombinierbar und austauschbar waren. Diese Annahme wird durch zahlreiche ägyptisierende Landschaftdarstellungen mit den gleichen Symbolen bestätigt, die zwar den Nil selbst nicht zeigen, aber für jedermann erkennbar Ägypten machten": egyptianising landscape scenes would therefore be metaphorical indications of the land of the Nile, in which however the Nile (god) himself does not occur[97]. In 1994 was published a 1992 dissertation by Cappel on pygmy scenes in Roman decorative art. The author presents a catalogue of a little 100 examples (from which 15 are Campana plates) and provides introductionary chapters on fore-runners and literary sources as well as 'Einzeluntersuchungen' on some iconographic themes. The booklet (129 pp.), more descriptive than interpretive and without illustrations, states that Nilotic scenes are mainly found in oeci and triclinia for reasons of "Amüsement und Unterhaltung", thus stressing the contemporary Roman situation in which dwarfs were used as entertainers. Nilotic landscapes would try to establish "eine Art klein Kanopos"[98]. Meyboom discusses Nilotic scenes from the first century BC in order to be able to express views on the function of the Nile mosaic of Palestrina, in which he extensively examines the meaning of the genre against the background of the relations between Italy and Egypt. He concludes: "Considering the variety of

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144. Cf. also eadem, Le thème de l'échassier avec un serpent reconsideré, *BABesch* 68 (1993) 121-128.

[96] Cf. cat. no. 004; I. Baldassarre, I. Bragantini, C. Morselli, F. Taglietti, *Necropoli di Porto. Isola Sacra* (1996) 177 for the quotation.

[97] *Klementa 1993*, 48 for the quotation.

[98] *Cappel 1994*, for both quotations see page 96. All in all this is the only (published) monograph on pygmee scenes with a reliable catalogue and interesting remarks on radiance and iconography. Unfortunately it is only seldomly used; I only came to know the book in the last phase of my research. For reasons of convenience and completeness I decided to include the relevant examples of Cappel's catalogue in the one here presented (part II). Note that Cappel refers to a Toronto dissertation by M.J. McKay on *Pygmee landscapes in Roman art* from 1985 that I have never seen nor seen used.

Nilotic scenes and their generic character at Pompeii, and the arbitrary way in which they could be used as decorations, it is difficult to recognize in them a specific religious meaning or function. It seems more probable that they were a generally suitable form of decoration with an exotic character and suggesting well-being and affluence"[99]. According to Meyboom, Nilotic scenes were not only decorations suggesting the presence of water and coolness, but they expressed in general terms the well-being of nature and mankind, the *truphe*, just like Dionysiac scenes and motifs. With regard to the Republican period there are no indications that Nilotic scenes should be interpreted religiously; they seem to reflect commercial and touristic interests. The lower half of the Nile mosaic from Palestrina shows, amongst other things, rituals with respect to the Nile flood and the gods Isis and Osiris associated with it. The comprehensive picture illustrates the happy state of Egypt due to the Nile flood. It thus would have a basically religious meaning in that it portrays the *truphe* of the country bestowed by Isis and Osiris. The presence of the mosaic in Praeneste is explained by Meyboom also from the assimilation of Isis with Fortuna, the city goddess of Praeneste, to whom the abundance shown in the mosaic was due. In an overview of the role of Isis and Sarapis in the late Roman Republic, Takács discusses the meaning of Nilotic scenes in the section "The creation of illusions"[100]. Both symbols of the Isis cult and Egyptian landscapes should be seen, according to Takács, as elements detached from their original (cultic) context, as components of a new, Roman style. Nilotic scenes specifically "delineated an exotic world (–) which provided an imaginary escape from the accepted and enforced norms (–); could provide an intellectual stimulus to escape the actual surroundings, the real world with all its trappings". Takács therefore interprets them as "providing controlled illusions as part of the experienced Romano-Campanian reality"; again a different interpretation of the phenomenon. Recently, in 1999, Rauch published a study on the so-called Campana plates with Nilotic scenes[101]. Besides presenting a catalogue and discussion of this material, the author provides an overview of the opinions on the genre in general and concludes: "Der Themenkreis der Nillandschaften gibt ein durch seine Exotik idealisiertes Land wieder". Furthermore she sees Nilotic landscapes as part of the "Ägyptenmode"[102]. Most recently, to conclude, new discoveries of mosaic fragments in Madrid and Rome suggested the existence of parallels for the most famous of all Nilotic landscapes: the mosaic in Palestrina[103].

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[99] Cf. cat. no. 006; *Meyboom 1995*, 78-90 and V n. 2 (84 and 90 for the quotations).

[100] *Takács 1995*, 32 ff., 34 for the quotation.

[101] *Rauch 1999*, 219-269.

4 *Set-up and aim of the research*

The above overview shows that there are different opinions on the meaning of Nilotic scenes in the Roman world. What is noticeable first of all (1) is the fact that none of these conclusions was drawn on the basis of the study of a complete as possible set of data. Often only on the basis of the study of one example or one group of examples from a particular region or time slice, hypotheses are formulated on the genre in general. Secondly (2) a good definition of the Nilotic scenes is lacking. The term is used generally, although there is no consensus on the fact of which (meaningful) elements a depiction should consist to qualify as Nilotic scene. The importance of the function of the room decorated by the Nilotic scene (3) is emphasised by a number of authors; no effort was made however to show these contexts systematically. Also (4) the meaning of the egyptianising scenes is only incidentally associated with the function of other Aegyptiaca in the Roman world. The study of the genre therefore has four important desiderata.

An attempt will be made in chapters II and III to answer as completely as possible the questions comprised within the desiderata. Next, on the basis of the conclusions generated by the study of the Nilotic scenes, Aegyptiaca in the Roman world in general and the problem of their meaning will be reviewed in chapter IV. The basis of the research is a representative catalogue of Nilotic scenes from the Roman world: the Corpus Figurarum Niloticarum, presented in chapter II. A brief description will be given of every Nilotic scene which, together with the figure, will make it possible to get an impression of the scene and its most important elements. Also the findspot, date, measurements and other further data and possible disagreements on the interpretation will be recorded. In chapter III the corpus will be interpreted and contextualised on the basis of four questions: where do Nilotic scenes occur? (the topographical distribution), when? (the chronological distribution), in which contexts? (the contextual distribution), and what exactly do they show? (an inventory of the depicted elements and their meanings). Based on the answers to these questions, an attempt will be made to reconstruct the function of the genre.

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[102] *Rauch 1999*, 251-253 ("V: Das Motiv der Nillandschaft"), 252 and 253 for the quotations.

[103] *Versluys 2000*, with n. 59.

In chapter IV, first of all the wider frame will be sketched of which the Nilotic scenes form part: the Roman Aegyptiaca. In the first instance to verify the interpretation of the genre, proposed in chapter II, in addition to introduce the reader to the archaeological monuments and artefacts, whose role and meaning are the key of this chapter. Based on this general study of Aegyptiaca Romana in the entire Roman world, it will become clear that neither this material category nor the Nilotic scenes will permit an unequivocal interpretation. As a case study, the Aegyptiaca preserved in Rome will therefore be examined and interpreted, and it will be ascertained to what extent the suggested interpretations of that material have general validity.

Apart from a study of Aegyptiaca Romana at a factual level—an archaeological monograph on Nilotic scenes and their meaning in the Roman world (chapters II and III)—and at what perhaps may be called a contextual/interpretative level—a more general treatise on the meaning of Egyptian and egyptianising material culture in the Roman world (chapter IV)—the study would like to pay attention to the social/cultural historical level. This will occur in chapter V. Aegyptiaca Romana, amongst them the Nilotic scenes, form part of the reflection of the Roman attitude towards and thoughts on Egypt, Egyptians and Egyptian culture. An attempt will be made in chapter V to illustrate and explain the position occupied by Egypt in the Roman mind. By this concluding chapter, the Nilotic scenes, the starting-point of the research, will be elucidated even more diversely—and thereby better understood.

It should be emphasised that the Nilotic scenes form the core of this study; comprehensiveness has been attempted in their discussion. This cannot apply to the Egyptian and egyptianising artefacts in the Roman world in general and to the Roman conceptualisation of Egypt. Hopefully a new line of approach will be added in these respects which will be valuable enough to be elaborated further and more systematically.

PART II
CORPUS FIGURARUM NILOTICARUM

CORPUS FIGURARUM NILOTICARUM

In the following corpus, 131 Nilotic scenes are topographically organised, presented, described and illustrated. The catalogue aims to give a representative overview of the Nilotic landscapes preserved from the Roman world from the second century BC to the sixth century AD. In a number of aspects this corpus does not claim to be exhaustive. This refers in the first place to the scope of the catalogue. All examples of the genre known from the various (topographical) syntheses have been collected, supplemented by a large number of separate examples and a smaller number of new finds. There is no doubt that the corpus could be further supplemented by examples known from more specialised literature or archaeological fieldwork. I believe, however, that these will not alter fundamentally the image presented here.

As soon as the collection of the material could reasonably be called representative, I have opted for an emphasis on interpretation rather than an expansion of the material, with all attendant dangers. Therefore also in the presentation of the catalogue no comprehensiveness was aimed for. If a reliable, easily accessible description of the representation is available, then this is briefly indicated and the reader is referred to the relevant publication. As illustrations of nearly all Nilotic scenes described have been included, they form an integral part of the presentation; not every lotus flower or duck has been included in the description.

A considerable number of Nilotic landscapes is often cited, referred to or depicted without the text giving any opinion in respect of the interpretation of the scene, genre or context. Therefore the bibliography of every catalogue number is selective. In general, I have endeavoured to mention the first (excavation) publication and subsequently only those publications which actually have something relevant to say about the Nilotic scene or by which the picture is known, and to the more synthesising articles mentioned in the status quaestionis. If a recent publication is available with a good bibliography on the Nilotic scene, this will be referred to with the indication 'with further previous literature'.

Sometimes a context has preserved more than one Nilotic scene.

If it roughly concerns the same kind of (archaeological) material from the same period, these are discussed as one catalogue number. If it, e.g., concerns a mosaic from the period around 25 BC and a wall-painting from c. AD 70 with a totally different character, the testimonies from the same context are split up into two catalogue numbers.

Nilotic scenes are defined in this study as illustrations of the (flooded) Nile and the banks of the river with the flora, fauna, structures, and activities of the population, and scenes which intend to show this or which contain a combination of specific, associative elements referring to this. Only with the publication of Meyboom's monograph in 1995 did the relationship between the many scenes which hitherto had been rather arbitrarily designated as Nilotic scenes become fully clear. Nilotic scenes are not arbitrary representations of Egypt but are flood scenes. The life-giving flood of the Nile which provided Egypt's fertility, caused amazement throughout Antiquity. The Nile flood was a unique and much discussed phenomenon in the ancient Mediterranean world: while everywhere the land was dry and infertile and all rivers had reached their lowest level, the Nile flooded, thereby providing a period of festivity and abundance[104]. We are therefore not dealing with images of Egypt primarily testifying to a cultural or scientific interest. A comparison with the depiction of the country of the Nile at the beginning of the 19th century may perhaps clarify this distinction. Both the frontispiece of the original publication of the *Description de l'Egypte: Antiquités* of 1809 and that of the from 1821 onwards much more widely distributed 'édition Pancoucke' illustrate which elements of Egypt struck the European observer as typical: pyramids, obelisks, the enormous temple complexes, palm trees and the Nile[105]. The hallmark of Egypt, the pyramids, does not appear in any Nilotic scene, obelisks and monumental temples only rarely so. The Nile, recognizable by the typical lotus flower, is a set element in Nilotic landscapes. An abundance of characteristic iconographic details shows that the Nile flood is the real subject of the scenes. This is evident in examples of the genre from the Republican period: the Nile mosaic of Palestrina (around 110 BC), as well as a mosaic from Rome from the same period, the two oldest and most elaborate examples of the genre, show the Egyptian delta during the flood of the Nile with a detailed representation of the flora, fauna, activities, feasts and rituals typical for that period[106]. Later Nilotic scenes are much less elaborate and have a simpler character; often only a few lotus flowers or a dancing dwarf point to the background of the representation. These dissociated elements make the criteria on which a Nilotic scene can be defined as such more fluid. A large number of scenes from the Roman world have survived in which Nilotic elements can be seen, in which, as far as can be ascertained, the presentation is not pictured as on or at the Nile. The presence of Nile water, whether or not suggested by a lotus flower, has primarily determined the selection.

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[104] Cf., summarising, still *Bonneau 1964*. See also Ch. III 4.1.1.

[105] Cf. respectively *Meyboom 1995*, fig. 66 and *Versluys/Meyboom* 2000, fig. 1.

In order to keep the catalogue as true as possible it was also decided that the representation would be included only if at least two Nilotic elements were present. A consequence of this decision is that there are a large number of doubtful cases; for example, scenes of dwarves not occurring in a Nilotic environment (perhaps the lotus flower was in the part of the painting which went missing) or water landscapes showing an element occurring in Nilotic scenes but which is also a much more general element, such as the depiction of a traveller (perhaps the Egyptian towerhouse is no longer visible). In order to meet this problem, a list has been included in the appendix of the most notable doubtful cases and parallels. I am aware that some attributions and rejections are debatable; I believe, however, that such a debate would not alter the total picture presented and it is therefore only of secondary importance. This also counts for a discussion on the attention given to the different categories of (archaeological) material. Most Nilotic landscapes are wall paintings or mosaics and hence I have focussed on these subjects in, e.g., my search for new evidence. Campana-plates, oil lamps, sarcophagi, pottery and glass vessels showing Nilotic subjects were less focussed on. The examples to my knowledge are, however, discussed, in the catalogue proper or in the appendix. Together the catalogue and appendix give a good picture of the distribution and radiation of the phenomenon, from a detailed picture of the interment of Osiris in mosaic or a quick sketch of a palm tree and an Egyptian towerhouse to an oil lamp showing dancing pygmies in a boat[107].

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[106] Cat. nos. 006 and 025.

[107] As mentioned in the status quaestionis (Ch. I 3.2) I only consulted the catalogue of pygmy scenes published in *Cappel 1994* in finishing the manuscript. Pygmee scenes listed by her that are not discussed or mentioned in this book are: *Cappel 1994* sv. W6 (Bolsena); sv. W19 (Pompeii VII 14, 5, triclinium, fighting pygmies);

The catalogue is presented topographically. First of all Italy, because most Nilotic scenes have been preserved there; within Italy first by Roman province (in which province I 'Latium et Campania' was split into 'Latium' and 'Campania'), subsequently alphabetically by place. When, as in the case of Rome and Pompeii, several Nilotic scenes occur in one place, the (in archaeological literature) customary classification of that place has been adhered to; in the case of Rome the Augustan regions, in Pompeii the 19th century division of the town. Next North Africa (by province from west to east and within each province alphabetically), Egypt, the European provinces of the Empire (again from west to east) and the Near East (from north to south)[108]. Per catalogue number five data will be mentioned first:

a: genre (mosaic, painting, relief, etc.)
b: original context (name of building or house in the archaeological literature, the room within that context, possible explication, etc.)
c: further particulars about the object (dimensions in metres, form, frame, restorations, which part of the whole the object forms, etc.)
d: present whereabouts (in situ, museum, inventory number, etc.)
e: date.

Then follows a description of the Nilotic scene and, if necessary, a discussion of different interpretations of the representation itself or its date. Next the context of the Nilotic scene will be discussed in further detail. Thus an attempt will be made to place the illustration, isolated by the selection criteria of this research, back into the meaningful setting of its provenance. A focuss on the context will prove to be essential in the final interpretation and therefore this primary context has been given a prominent place in the catalogue. To conclude, as mentioned before, there will be a selective bibliography. Besides the abbreviations listed in the bibliography, the following indications are used: BM (=British Museum), GRM (=Graeco-Roman Museum), Louvre (= Musée du Louvre), MN

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sv. W30 (MN 9090, pygmies); sv. W31 (MN 9101, fighting pygmy); sv. M10 (MNR 125902, from Rome, via Praenestina, pygmies fighting cranes); sv. S1 and S2 (MN 9629 and MN 9568, both stucco reliefs from Puteoli with armed pygmies and cranes).

[108] See for this division and the special position of Egypt further the introduction of Ch. III.

(Museo Nazionale Archeologico), MNR (=Museo Nazionale Romano), MV (=Musei Vaticani), RMO (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden).

In general the modern names of towns, places or archaeological sites are used. If also the ancient name of such a place is frequently used in archaeological literature, this is mentioned between brackets, e.g. Sousse (Hadrumetum).

As for the dates of the objects, I normally follow the (most) recent literature mentioned in the bibliography. If not, my deviated choice is explained. In discussing a controversy between different scholars in this field, my choice for one of the options is briefly explained. In general I have tried not to suggest a precision in dating that in fact does not seem to exist. With wall-paintings from Pompeii the indication 'around 70 AD' is used for Fourth Style paintings from the period 62-79 AD.

The attention given to the contexts of each catalogue number is not always even. Some contexts are enlarged on, because they are exemplary or will prove to be important for the final reconstruction of the meaning of the genre.

Two objects from unknown provenance (cat. nos. 077 and 078, probably Italy though) have arbitrarily been included in category 1.2.6 for reasons of convenience.

1 *Italy*

1.1 *Latium*

1.1.1 *Ostia*

001 Ostia

a. Mosaic.
b. Terme di Nettuno (II, iv), room 7 (next to the eastern entrance), probably a bar or shop.
c. Original size 1.6 x 3.7; upper left corner lost. The black and white picture is surrounded by a black frame.
d. In situ.
e. 100-150 AD.

A dwarf fleeing from a crocodile can be seen on the right of the mosaic. The pygmy is depicted in a caricatural manner with a fat belly and a large phallus. He is holding two sticks in his left hand

and stretches out his right hand in some kind of gesture. His face is lost. Behind the dwarf, a crocodile stands between two tall lotus flowers. In the central part of the mosaic a canoe with a geometric design on the outside can be distinguished. The prow is shaped like the head of a lion. Amphorae lie on the forecastle and one can see two tall poles, probably carrying a velum that provided protection from the sun. The river was indicated by tall lotuses and other waterplants.

The scene depicted under the velum has been lost. Becatti has suggested reconstructing a symplegma scene, which does indeed seem probable. The few remains as well as the overall character of the picture point in that direction.

The construction of block II, iv was started under Hadrian and was completed under Antonius Pius: the thermae were finally ready in AD 139[109]. The room where the Nilotic mosaic was found was probably added on a short while after the adjoining rooms but still in Hadrian's time: the walls can be dated to the late Hadrianic period. During the excavation of the room in which the Nilotic mosaic is located, a floor covered with floor tiles was found on top[110]. Apparently the mosaic was no longer used in one of the later occupation phases.

There is some uncertainty about the function of this room, next to the eastern entrance to the thermae complex. Vaglieri, head of the excavation during 1909/10, thought that it was a porter's lodge, while Becatti, who published the mosaic, reconstructed a latrine[111]. Both interpretations seem rather improbable, at least for the first occupation phases. A look at the plan clearly shows that the whole southern enclosure of the thermae consists of almost identical rooms. The thermae complex therefore had no monumental facade with entry to the decumanus but was delimited by a row of shops or bars to which entrance could be gained via the porticus which was next to the decumanus[112]. The room therefore probably served in a first instance as a bar or shop and was connected to the adjoining room which lies at the porticus. This of course does not preclude a secondary use as porter's lodge or something similar. The room is now in use for storage, with the consequence that the mosaic is covered and visibility is rather restricted.

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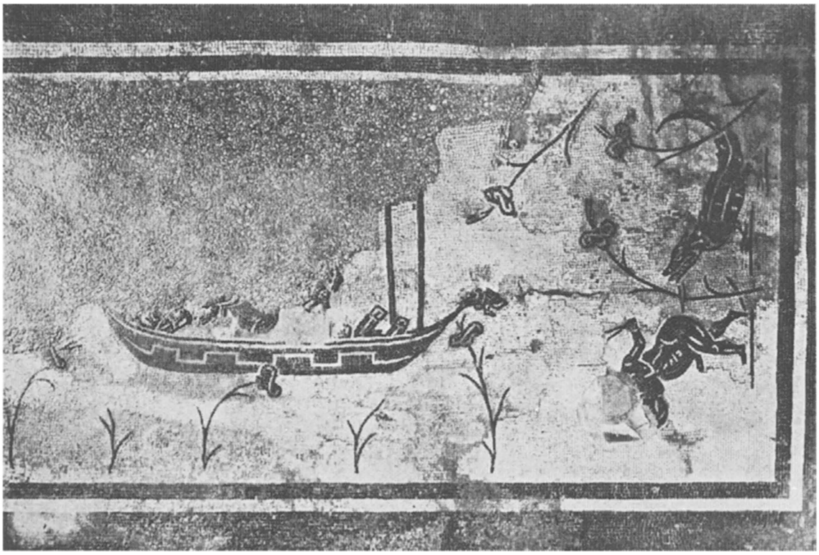
[109] *Meiggs 1973*, 409; T.L. Heres, *Paries* (1982) 443-453, fig. 79 (ground plan); *Bakker 1994*, 59 sv. 'baths' no. 6 gives a chronology in seven phases till the end of the 4th century AD.

[110] Cf. for both observations T.L. Heres, Una ricerca sulla storia edilizia delle Terme di Nettuno ad Ostia Antica (II,4,2) nel periodo post-adrianeo, *MededRom* 40 (1978) 93-112, 107. The floor tiles have completely disappeared. On the ground plan used by Heres the room is indicated as Fa.

[111] *Becatti 1961*, 60.

Becatti 1961, 59-60 sv. 74; *Pavolini 1983*, 55; *Cappel 1994*, sv. M9.



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002 Ostia

a. Mosaic.
b. Sanctuary of Sarapis (III, xvii), inner court.
c. Originally the inner court was decorated with one large floor mosaic measuring 8 x 11. Only a few fragments remain, set in modern white concrete. The original composition of the black and white fragments remains unknown.
d. In situ.
e. 100-150 AD.

At the entrance an ibis can be seen walking between waterplants and other flowers. The bird has an open bill and a raised left foot. Clockwise one encounters first a dwarf with a conical hat and a beard, who holds a hippopotamus by its tail. Only a small part of the animal has been preserved. The setting is indicated by water lilies and other plants. The next fragment shows a snake fighting two crocodiles, as well as a crocodile and an ibis between waterplants. Other remains probably also show the back and tail of a crocodile. Perhaps also the hind legs and the shell of a tortoise can be identified. Both animals are again surrounded by waterplants. The last fragments seem to show the back of a hippopotamus. On the left stands an ibis.

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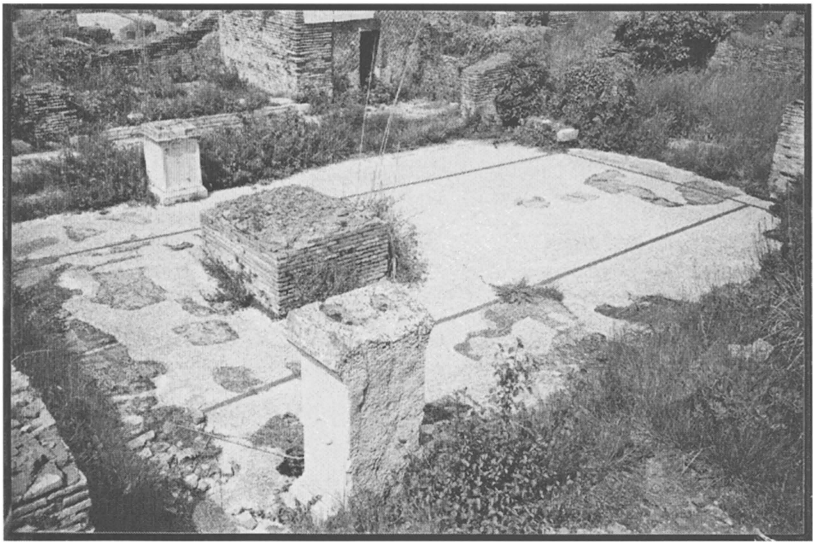
[112] *Meiggs 1973*, 411.



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From the *Fasti Ostienses* it is known that the Serapeum was dedicated in AD 127 by a certain Caltilius P[-][113]. This date is confirmed by a large number of brick stamps dating between AD 123 and 126. The sanctuary was built *sua pecunia*: we are therefore dealing here with a private enterprise. It is a modest complex with a brick platform temple behind the courtyard. On either side of this axis there is a porticus decorated with marble, and next to it a number of different rooms. The entrance to the sanctuary is decorated with a well-preserved mosaic showing the Apis bull. During the excavation remains of egyptianising granite statues were found while the floor of the inner courtyard was decorated with a Nilotic mosaic of huge proportions[114]. On the basis of these indications we may conclude that the sanctuary was decorated in the Egyptian style. In the 3rd or 4th century AD the rooms on either side of the porticus were added to the adjacent properties[115]. Evidently the sanctuary could only continue to exist in a slimmed down form. Recent Spanish research supplied detailed reconstructions of the temple and provided arguments for conclusions on the entire sanctuary, and (the role of) the surrounding architecture. The function of the sanctuary seems to have been diverse: obviously cultic, but also economic (a nearby horreum belonged to the complex) and otherwise profane (nearby thermae could be reached via the sanctuary)[116].

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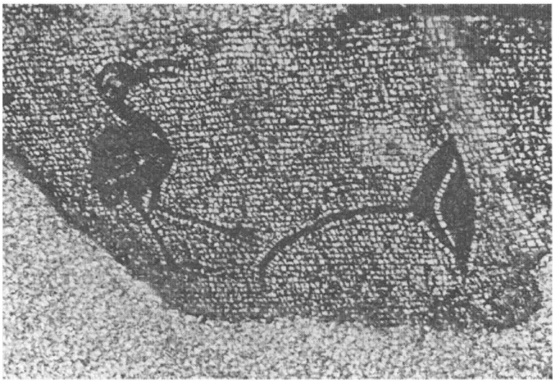
[113] *viii k(alendas) febr(uarius) templum sarapi, quod [.] caltilius p[—] sua pecunia exstruxit, dedicatum [es]t*, cf. *Malaise 1972a*, 71-72 sv. 18 and *RICIS* 503/1102.



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It has been suggested that the northwestern part of region III, where the Serapeum is located, was a kind of oriental quarter. However, there do not seem to be enough indications to sustain that suggestion[117].

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[114] Cf. *Malaise 1972a*, 78-82 sv. 66-92.

[115] *Meiggs 1973*, 367-368.

[116] R. Mar, El Serapeum Ostiense y la urbanística de la ciudad. Una aproximación a su estudio, *BdA* 13-15 (1992) 31-51; R. Mar, Santuarios e inversión inmobiliaria en la urbanística ostiense del siglo II, in: A.G. Zevi, A. Claridge (eds.), *Roman Ostia revisited* (1996) 115-164.

[117] *Meiggs 1973*, 419 n.1 ("something of an oriental quarter") based on the worship of oriental gods and Greek graffiti, contra *Bakker 1994*, 192: "Neither the gods nor the graffiti are numerous enough to provide certainty". It is certain though that

Becatti 1961, 151-152 sv. 289; *Floriani Squarciapino 1962*, 21; *Malaise 1972a*, 78-82; *Pavolini 1983*, 128; *Cappel 1994*, sv. M8

003 Ostia

a. Mosaic.
b. 'Case a Giardino' (III, ix), water basin.
c. The floor of the basin measures 2.9 x 3. This was also the original dimension of the high-quality mosaic which has only partly been preserved. The tesserae are mainly black and white, but also coloured marble has been used. The mosaic had an unusual and irregular shape. In the remaining parts two registers can be distinguished. The mosaic is framed by a band of two undulating lines of coloured marble.
d. In situ, however totally overgrown.
e. 100-150 AD.

In the centre of the first register one can see a crocodile. He turns right and faces an animal from which only the paws remain. Behind the crocodile a snake rises up. Under this scene with hostile animals, a symplegma scene is depicted. A dwarf, with his hands raised in the air and a wreath in his hair, tries to penetrate a female pygmy from behind.

The second register shows a dwarf fighting a crocodile. The pygmy is depicted with a disproportionally large phallus. In his raised right hand he is holding a club and in his left hand the upper part of an amphora as a shield. Behind this scene a large lotus flower is depicted to indicate the river landscape. After a lacuna, another naked dwarf can be distinguished who seems to seize something with his right hand. A duck is also depicted.

The 'Case a Giardino' complex was built around AD 128 and consists of apartment blocks, which were situated in the centre of an open space which can be interpreted as a garden or park. In this garden surrounding the block were six basins, at regular intervals from each other. The walls of around 1.30 m high have not all been preserved. In one case the bottom of the basin was decorated with a Nilotic scene; the bottoms of the other basins have not been pre-

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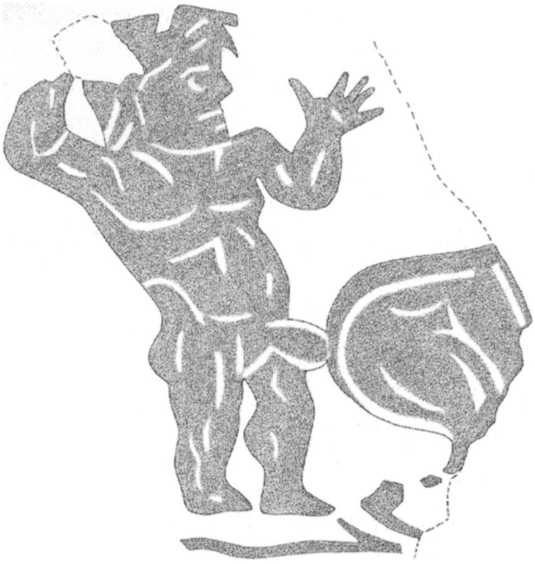
in Portus the number of Orientals must have been very large, as graphically illustrated by the Sarapis worship: the inscriptions in Portus which refer to this are mostly put in Greek; inscriptions in the Serapeum in Ostia are mostly in Latin.



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served. One viewed the scene through a layer of water which would have added a lively and animated effect. Perhaps the basins served as a pond[118].

Becatti 1961, 113-114 sv. 213; *Pavolini 1983*, 157; *LIMC* sv. pygmaioi 51c; *Cappel 1994*, sv. M17.

004 Ostia

a. Mosaic.
b. Isola Sacra, tomb 16, forecourt.
c. The black and white mosaic (1.72 x 2.50, both maximum) shows several scenes clustered around a, now largely missing, large lobster or Okeanos head in the centre of the portrait. A few antique restorations are visible.
d. In situ.
e. 150-200 AD.

A crocodile that is being attacked by two small boats each with two dwarves is the main topic. One of the boats, facing the crocodile, has a stern in the form of a donkey and the prow as an ibis head. Both dwarves are depicted in a caricatural manner. One of them, using the top of an amphora as a shield and with a large club in his right hand, is about to attack the crocodile. The other pygmy tends the scull. The second boat, which is a little smaller and also has a prow shaped like an ibis head, attacks the crocodile from the other side. One of the dwarves is bent forward and stabs the crocodile with a long stick. This gives the other dwarf the opportunity to try and penetrate him from behind. He dances and holds two pairs of crossed sticks in his hands. The setting is indicated by four different kinds of waterplants, executed in great detail. The two other scenes show a caricaturally depicted hippopotamus amid the rushes next to a date palm and a dwarf with a large phallus, carrying baskets.

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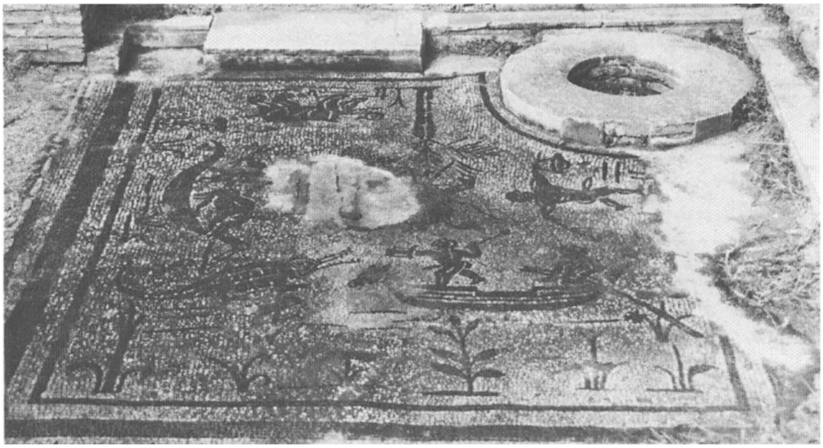
[118] For the complex in general cf. M.E. Blake, *Roman construction in Italy from Nerva through the Antonines* (1973) 189-191. For the dating cf. *Bakker 1994*, 47-48 sv. 'other habitations' no. 10-21.



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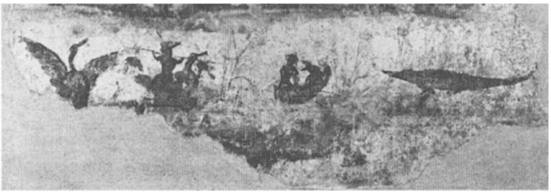
Tomb 16 of the so-called Isola Sacra consists of a simple, covered burial chamber, with recesses for both inhumations and cremations. In front of this chamber there is a kind of forecourt which was also used for burials, as can be seen from the many recesses made in the various walls. Between the burial chamber and one of the adjacent properties there is a space which could be reached via the court and was also used for burials. That part of the floor of the court bordering directly onto the step to the burial chamber was decorated with the Nilotic mosaic; the remaining space was covered by a simple, non-figurative mosaic floor. In the top righthand corner of the Nile mosaic a part has been left blank as there is a round well there. The complex seems to have been built in two phases: first the burial chamber (circa AD 150-160), later extended with the forecourt and the mosaic. The decoration in the burial chamber itself has only been preserved fragmentarily. The floor was decorated with a black and white mosaic which shows a peopled scroll. In some of the recesses there are still paintings and plaster decorations visible which seem to have had a Dionysiac character.

G. Calza, *La necropoli del porto di Roma nell'Isola Sacra* (1940) 172-173, 294-297; *Becatti 1961*, 306; *LIMC* sv. pygmaioi 51a; I. Baldassarre, I. Bragantini, C. Morselli, F. Taglietti, *Necropoli di Porto. Isola Sacra* (1996) 172-180 sv. tomba 16, 176-177; *Cappel 1994*, sv. M12.

005 Ostia

a. Painting.
b. Via Laurentina, tomb 22.
c. The overall dimensions of this large fragment of wall-painting are 1.7 x 2.45. The upper register shows a huge lion with a bull's head in its claws. Below, and on a smaller scale, a Nilotic landscape is depicted.
d. Museo Ostiense, 142.
e. 125-150 AD.

On the left, between the rushes, a duck with spread wings tries to fly off. Next to the animal, a dwarf can be seen riding another duck. He has a stick with ducks as captured booty over his shoulder and is wearing a green hat. In the centre two dwarves in a small boat are depicted. One of them points in the direction of the duck-rider, while the other piddles in the water. Further to the right a large crocodile hides among the rushes. Water and waterplants were painted everywhere between the figures and animals.



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The cemetery outside the porta Laurentia was used by the common people. The mediocre quality of the painting seems to confirm the impression that we are here in fact not dealing with a tomb of a wealthy family from the upper classes[119].

R. Calza, M. Floriani Squarciapino, *Museo Ostiense* (1962) 109 sv. 14; Th. Kraus, *Das römische Weltreich* (Propyläen Kunstgeschichte, Band 2) (1967) 211; *Helbig*(4) no. 3184; *LIMC* sv. pygmaioi 48; *Cappel 1994*, sv. W37.

1.1.2 *Palestrina*

006 Palestrina (Praeneste)

a. Mosaic.
b. Curia of the city, grotto-nymphaeum.
c. The dimensions of the mosaic are 4.31 x 5.85. The tesserae vary considerably in size and show a large variety of colours and tones. In the last three centuries the mosaic has been heavily restored on various occasions.
d. Museo Nazionale Prenestino, Palestrina.
e. 120-110 BC.

The mosaic is divided into an upper and a lower half. The upper part offers a picture of Aethiopia, i.e. that part of Africa that lies below the first cataract at Assuan, present-day Nubia and the Sudan. The accurately represented landscape depicts a large number of Sudanese animals, often with their names inscribed. The lower part is usually considered to be either a picture of the Nile valley from Assuan to the delta or simply a genre scene. On closer inspection, however, it appears that among the many scenes that represent the festive mood and the pastimes of the population at the time of the annual Nile flood, there are also scenes depicting various stages of the Khoiak ritual of Osiris. There is a temple for Osiris, presumably the one at Canopus, where the revival ritual of the corn-Osiris had taken place. There is the procession with the sarcophagus of Osiris, which is on its way to the funerary chapel in a sacred wood, the abaton. There is also a banquet of Ptolemaic soldiers which is about to begin. Originally the Pharaoh and his queen probably took part in this banquet, but that particular part of the mosaic is now missing.

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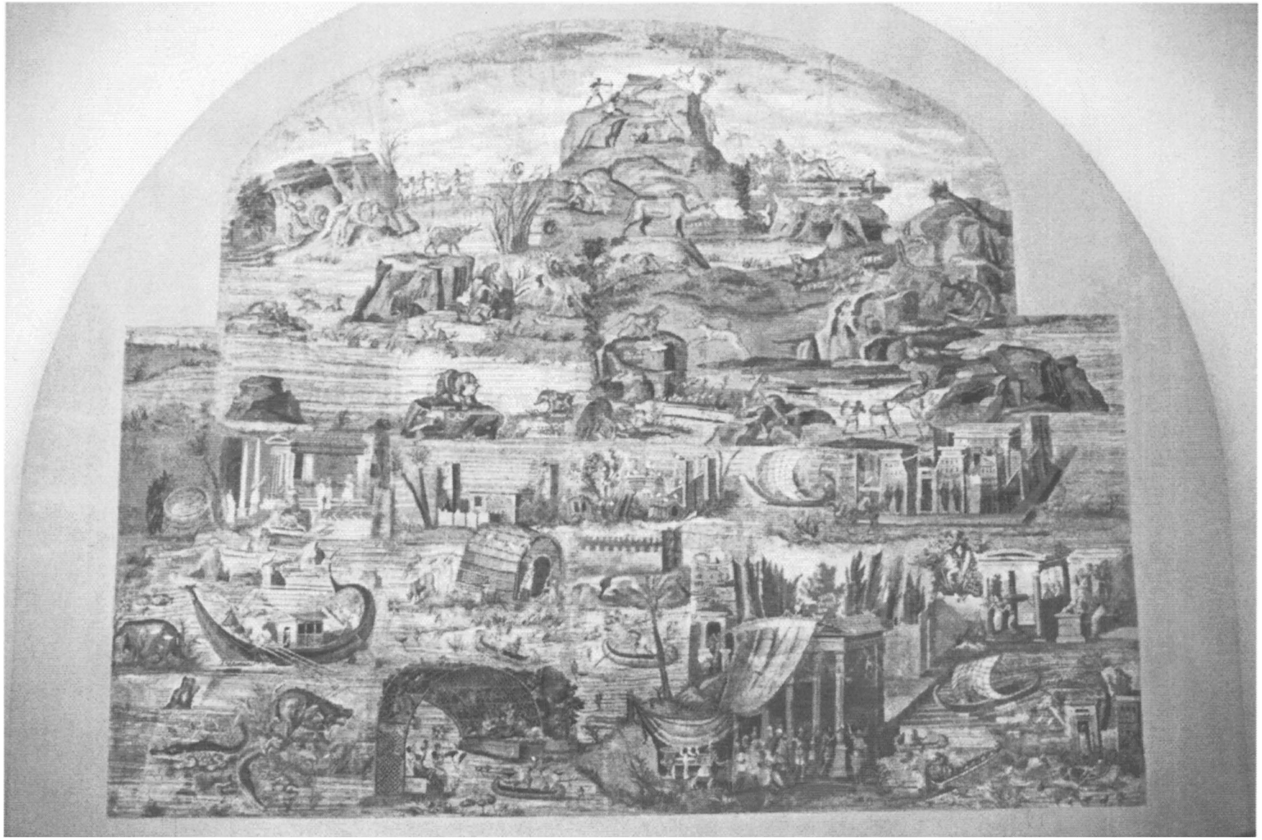
[119] *Bakker 1994*, 173 n. 10.



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For all detailed information and an extensive description, see *Meyboom 1995.*

The Nile mosaic of Palestrina was neither part of the Fortuna sanctuary nor of a temple of Isis, as is often assumed. The so-called lower complex formed the town centre of ancient Praeneste. Surrounding the forum were a vestibule, a basilica, various buildings for administrative purposes, the aerarium and a public space which served as a curia. The rear of the curia was decorated with a semicircular nymphaeum which was cut into the rock of the mountain against which the curia was built. The floor of the nymphaeum was decorated with a Nilotic scene, and water seeping through the porous stone of the mountain flowed over this mosiac. The curia was situated next to a large hall with a colonnade. On the other side of this hall was a kind of courtyard. The floor here was also decorated with a large mosaic showing an elaborate fish scene. The two nymphaea and the two mosaics functioned as pendant[120].

E. Schmidt, *Studien zum barberinischen Mosaik in Palestrina* (1929); G. Gullini, *I mosaici di Palestrina* (1956); K.M. Phillips, *The Barberini Mosiac: sunt hominum animaliumque complures imagines* (1962); H. Whitehouse, *The Dal Pozzo copies of the Palestrina mosaic* (1976); A. Steinmayer-Schareika, *Das Nilmosaik von Palestrina und eine ptolemaische Expedition nach Athiopien* (1978); *Meyboom 1995* (with further previous literature).

007 Palestrina (Praeneste)

a. Mosaic.
b. Unknown.
c. The little emblema is said to have been found in 1755, under the church of S. Luca.
d. Villa Albani, Rome, 211.
e. 150-200 AD, if not false.

A boat with a cabin is sailing on the river Nile during the flood. In the water one can see a crocodile, a fish, a dolphin and different kinds of waterplants. In the background a small piece of land with a building on it emerges from the water.

According to Parlasca only the lower part of the emblema (the fish and the crocodile) can be considered antique, and he thinks the frame

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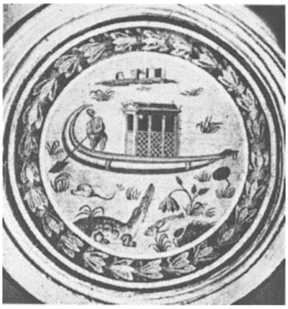
[120] *Meyboom 1995*, 8-16 and fig. 2 (ground plan).



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to be probably antique. Apparently the other parts were filled in subsequently. Meyboom follows Parlasca in his description. *Werner 1994* considers the whole piece as "völlig moderne Arbeit"; in his 1998 book he adds some substantial arguments for this opinion.

Also another, almost identical, emblema is of interest here. It is now in the collection of the Vatican Museums (Gabinetto delle Maschere, 795) and obviously a forgery; Parlasca suggests that this piece was made with the restoration of the Palestrina emblema.

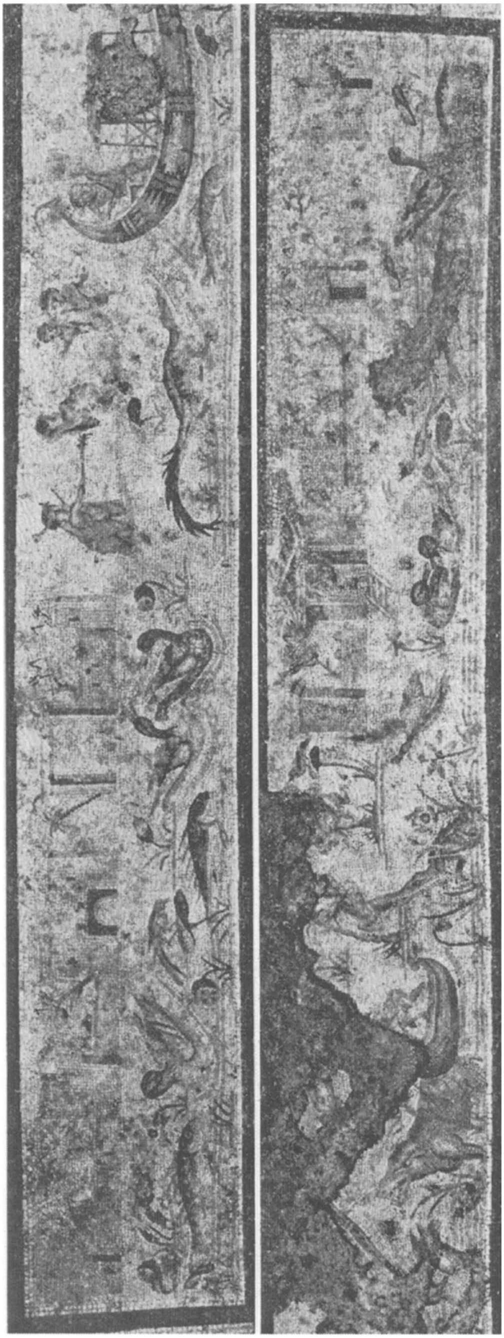
W. Amelung, *Die Skulpturen des Vatikanischen Museums* (1903) 706-707; *Van Essen 1954*, 67; K. Parlasca, Mosaikfälschungen, *RM* 65 (1958) 155 ff., 166-167; *Helbig*(4) no. 3312; *Meyboom 1979*, 64 n. 41; *Whitehouse 1985*, 129, 132 n. 15; M. De Vos in: C. Bol, *Forschungen zur Villa Albani. Katalog der antiken Bildwerke* III (1992) 254 sv. 347; *Cappel 1994*, sv. U4; *Werner 1994*, 366 sv. K174 and 367 sv. K175; *Werner 1998*, 142-146, esp. 143-144.

1.1.3 *Priverno*

008 Priverno (Privernum)

a. Mosaic.
b. So-called 'domus della soglia nilotica', entrance to the tablinum.
c. It concerns an oblong, figurative mosaic measuring about 0.50 x 4. The picture has a background of white tesserae with coloured figures, and is framed by two rows of black tesserae.
d. Museo Archeologico, Priverno, 1243.
e. Around 30-20 BC.

In the centre of the mosaic sails a large papyrus canoe with a cabin and a remarkably high, curved prow. The dwarf on the poop raises



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his right hand in the air, while tending the rudder with his left hand. On the forecastle stands another pygmy; both are looking at the centre of the vessel. The mosaic is heavily damaged there but enough seems to be left to reconstruct a third dwarf that is falling overboard. To the right of the boat a hippopotamus is depicted between waterplants. Behind the animal, a fourth dwarf is rowing a small papyrus canoe. Two other pygmies try to flee from a crocodile by climbing palm trees. In the foreground birds, plants, flowers and a fish are represented in detail. To the left of the boat, a crocodile can be seen swimming between waterplants. On the riverbank four standing dwarves can be distinguished. One of them, on the far left, is wearing trousers and a cloak and holds a stick and a large club. With the club he points in the direction of the pygmy in the middle who faces him with bent knees, but with his head turned in the direction of two pygmies behind him. To the left as well as to the right of this central part one can see the same picture: in the foreground the river with a detailed representation of flowers, plants, fishes and ducks, and in the background a walled city with towers, gates and a temple. On the city wall ibises are depicted. Also some palm trees can be distinguished.

There is some controversy as to the dating of this mosaic. Righi places it in the late Republican time, while Zevi suggests the end of the second century BC. Meyboom proposes the early Augustan period and is cautiously followed by Tammisto. Morricone (in press?) again suggests an early dating. On stylistic and iconographical grounds however an Augustan dating seems most probable.

The so-called 'domus della soglia Nilotica' has been excavated since the 1970's and has been well published. The luxurious house was located in a district northwest of the forum and the theatre of the town. The house had a peristyle of 15 x 17 m with 14 columns. The Nile mosaic decorated the passage from this peristyle to a tablinum. This location does not occur often, the only parallel being the Nile mosaic in the Casa del Fauna in Pompeii (cat. no. 047), which decorated the passage from the peristyle to a summer triclinium[121].

M. Canciellieri, *BLazioMerid* 11 (1979-1982) 35-41; R. Righi, Nuove ricerche e rinvenimenti nel Lazio Costiero meridionale, *AL* 6 (1984)

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[121] Cf. the mentioned monograph by Canciellieri and Morricone for all information and previous literature.

178-185; M. Canciellieri, C.M. Amici, Parco Archeologico Privernum: prima campagna di scavo, *AL* 11-2 (1993) 325-333; F. Zevi, *Enciclopedia Italiana. Quinto Appendice 1979-1992* (1993) 161 sv. Lazio; *Cappel 1994*, sv. M2; *Meyboom 1995*, V n. 16bis; *Tammisto 1997*, 368-369 sv. ns 5; M. Canciellieri, M.L. Morricone, *Privernum* I. *Premessa al museo e al parco archeologico: la topografia, i mosaici, le sculture* (in press?).

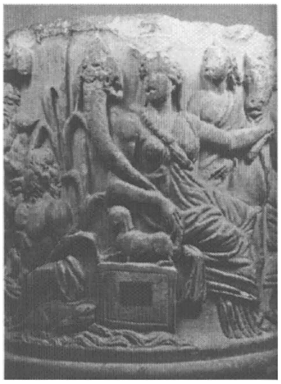
1.1.4 *Rome*

009 Rome

a. Relief.
b. Region II, the object can probably be related to the Iseum Metellinum.
c. The relief adorns the yellow marble base of an object that may be an altar, the decorated lower part of a column or a base. The height of the base is 0.68; the diameter at the top is 0.43.
d. MV, Rome, 2599. Former Collezione Mattei.
e. Around 250 AD.

The goddess Isis is shown having a cornucopiae in her right hand while holding a small branch in her outstretched left hand. In front of her lies a sphinx on a base, behind her stands a priest with next to him the Apis bull. Further to the right an adorant, dressed in a cloak and with a twig in his hands, approaches the holy water of the river depicted at his feet. In front of him an Egyptian priest can be seen, who stands on a small platform and holds a candelabrum in his hands. In front of him stands another man, dressed in a chiton and with a torch in his hands. A second priest at the waterside feeds crocodiles; the animals rise from the water to seize the food. He is assisted by a third priest who carries a bowl with food on his head. Next to the group is a small temple at the same river. To the right of the sanctuary one can see another statue of a sphinx on a base and a statue of a man whose head has been broken off. Next the reclining Nile god is depicted, only dressed in a cloth that covers his legs. With his left hand he holds a big plant under which a crocodile is hiding, and with his right hand he touches the headless statue. Behind the Nile god a priest is walking towards the feeding of the crocodiles, while carrying a basket with food on his head.

From ancient texts the feeding of the holy crocodiles at Arsinoë-Krokodeilopolis (in the Fayum, Egypt) is known. It may well be



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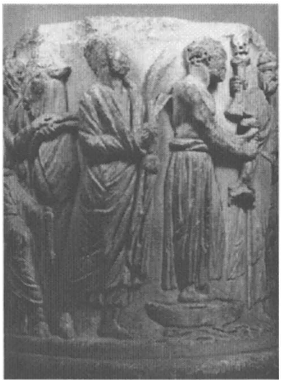

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possible that this religious ceremony is depicted or referred to in the relief.

We know from a statement by Lafaye that through the centuries a number of Egyptian and egyptianising objects have been found on the Caelius, near S. Maria in Domnica, amongst them this base which shows the feeding of the holy crocodiles[122]. In all probability, there has been, already from the first century BC, an Isis shrine or modest sanctuary at this location: the so-called Iseum Metellinum[123]. The base may well have belonged to the furnishings of this cult place. At the same spot a pendant of the base was found with Isis and Heracles depicted after the cleaning of the Augean stables[124].

Lafaye 1884, 295-296; G. Lippold, *Die Skulpturen des Vatikanischen Museums* III, 2 (1956) 226-229; *Bonneau 1964*, 354-355, 389 n. 1; *Malaise 1972a*, 168 sv. 310; *Helbig*(4) no. 529; *Klementa 1993*, 34-35 sv. A25; *Meyboom 1995*, V n. 33.

010 Rome

a. Mosaic.
b. Region II, near S. Stefano Rotondo.
c. The black and white floor mosaic was found in 1873 on the grounds of count Colacicchi, in the surroundings of S. Stefano Rotondo.

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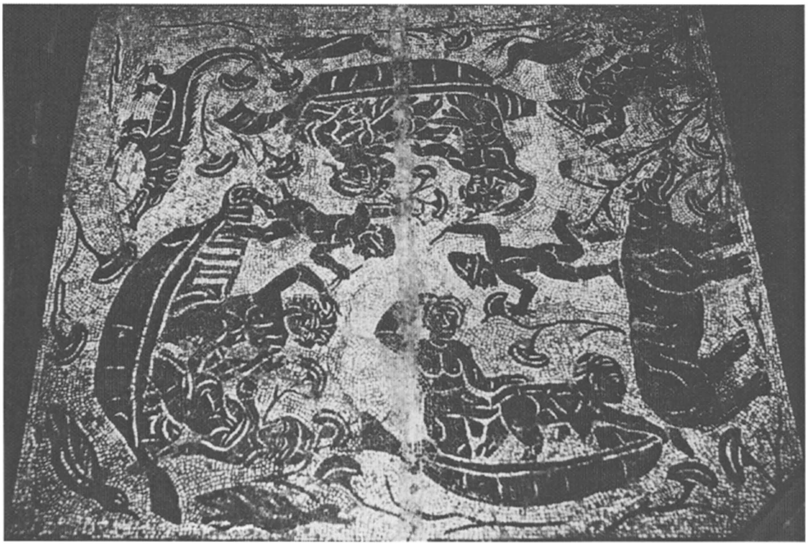
[122] Cf. Lafaye (sv. no.). Klementa (sv. no.) remarks mistakenly that the findspot is unknown.

[123] For a detailed discussion of this sanctuary cf. Ch. IV 2.2.1.

[124] MV, Rome, 2547; cf. *Helbig*(4) sv. no. 529.

d. MN, Naples, 122861. The mosaic is located in the floor of the storeroom ‘pornographica’.
e. 200-300 AD.

In the water lotuses, ducks and a crocodile are visible, as well as three boats with different kinds of symplegmata. Each time a man and a woman are depicted. On one of the vessels a pygmy with two sticks in his hand is dancing on the forecastle. On the shore one can distinguish another dwarf with a stick in his hand dancing on top of a hippopotamus while a third pygmee attacks the animal.



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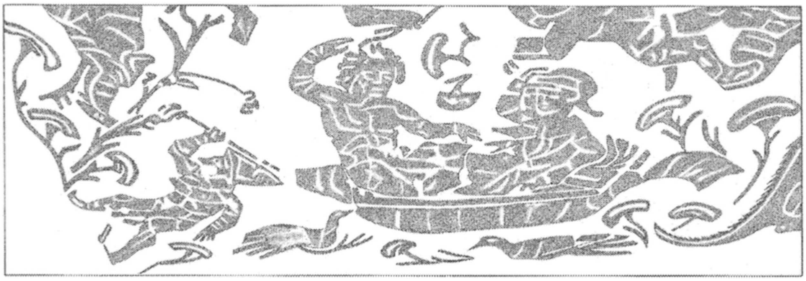
The context of the mosaic cannot be reconstructed with certainty; in the article of D’Asdia the different hypotheses are discussed. The author herself, being in favour of a date at the end of the third century AD, suggests a thermal context.

A.M. Colini, *Storia e topografia del Celio nell’antichità* (1944) 57, 239, 255; J. Marcadé, *Roma Amor. Essai sur les représentations érotiques dans l’art étrusque et romain* (1961) 40; *LIMC* sv. pygmaioi 51b; *Cappel 1994*, sv. M18; M. D’Asdia, Mosaici nilotici dal Celio, *BArte* 109-110 (1999) 77-86.



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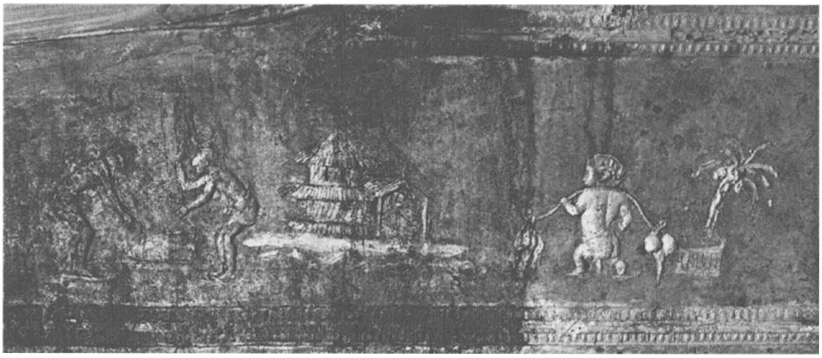
011 Rome

a. Relief.
b. Region V, so-called 'basilica sotterranea': a hypogaeum outside Porta Maggiore, aula.
c. The four scenes in plaster relief with a Nilotic character are located on the ceiling of the central nave of the aula.
d. In situ.
e. Around 20-40 AD.

A: in the centre of the picture stands a small building with a thatched roof next to a round tower. In the background the landscape is schematically indicated. Next to the buildings one can see two dwarves with an amphora between them. On the right walks another pygmy with a stick with captured birds over his shoulder. A fruitbearing palm is growing in what seems to be a wooden barrel.



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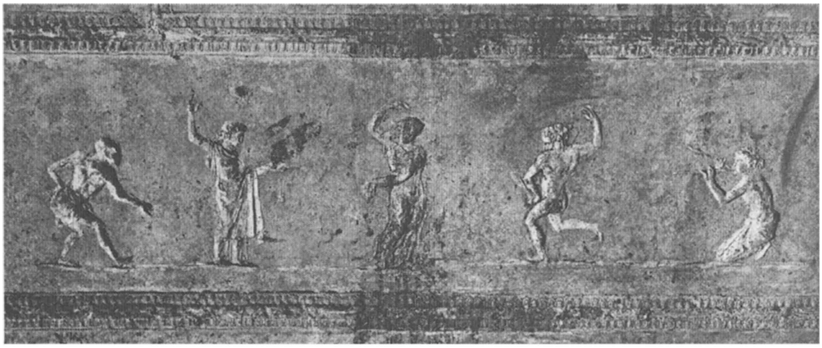
B: a dancing scene with five persons is depicted. On the right a musician is playing a double oboe. In the centre of the picture one can see a woman in a long chiton with two dancers on either side of her. On the left stands a spectator who encourages the dancers.



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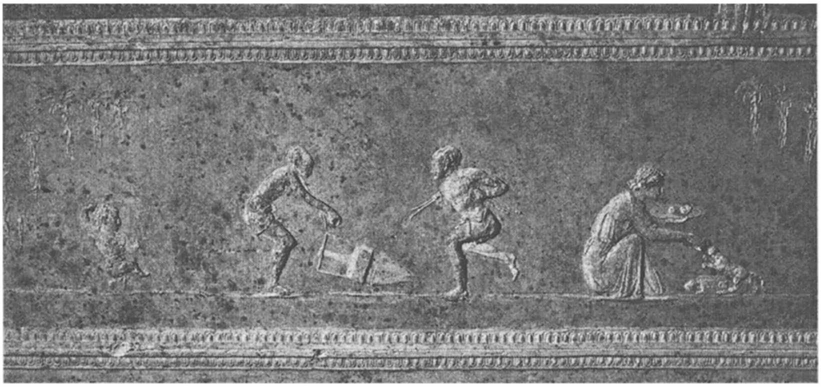
C: a lane with palm trees, portrayed in perspective at both sides of the picture, suggests an Egyptian environment. In the middle two dwarves are dancing around an amphora; a kneeling woman feeds two small animals.



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D: in a landscape with a standing amphora one can distinguish a woman who makes gestures above a small table. Under the table some plates and dishes are depicted. In the background an old man is walking, carrying a jar. On the left and right two figures are standing with high, pointed caps. A double oboe is placed against a tree.

There has long been a controversy over the function of this subterranean space, but it is now generally accepted that it had a funerary function. The complex consists of an entrance leading to an atrium, via which the triple naved aula with an apse at the end can be reached. The arches of the atrium and aula are decorated with plaster decoration. The four egyptianising scenes were applied to the middle nave of the aula, on either side of the two outer panels[125].

G. Bendinelli, Il monumento sotterraneo di Porta Maggiore in Roma, *MALinc* 31-3a (1927) 601 ff.; *Bendinelli 1929*, 36, tav. 1-3; S. Aurigemma, *La basilica sotterranea neopitagorica di Porta Maggiore in Roma* (1954); F.L. Bastet, *De datum van het grote hypogaeum bij de Porta Maggiore te Rome* (1958) 87-90; F.L. Bastet, Quelques remarques relatives à l'hypogee de la Porte Majeure, *BABesch* 45 (1970) 148-174, 170 ff.; H. Mielsch, *Römische Stuckreliefs* (1975) sv. K16; *LIMC* sv. pygmaioi 56; *Cappel 1994*, sv. S1.

012 Rome

a. Relief.
b. Region VI, perhaps the object can be related to the Serapeum on the Quirinal.
c. The base is 0.37 high and has a diameter of 0.33. Dräger reconstructs its function as a "Basis für abnehmbares Metallgefäss", which does indeed seem probable.
d. Museo Capitolino, Rome, 931.
e. 100-200 AD.

In the centre of the picture one can see the reclining Nile god with a cornucopiae in his hands. He leans on a hippopotamus and is surrounded by four putti. In the foreground the river with a crocodile can be distinguished. To the right of this scene, two nymphs at an altar are sculpted. They are both naked and seem to have just taken off their cloaks. The nymph on the left holds a jug in her hands, ready to pour it out onto the altar while she looks back in the direction of the Nile god. After a large plant, a third scene shows a barque with a man tending the rudder. Two date palms can also be distinguished.

Based on literary sources and two inscriptions, amongst them a dedication inscription by Caracalla, it can be accepted with reasonable certainty that there was a Serapeum on the Quirinal. Architectural

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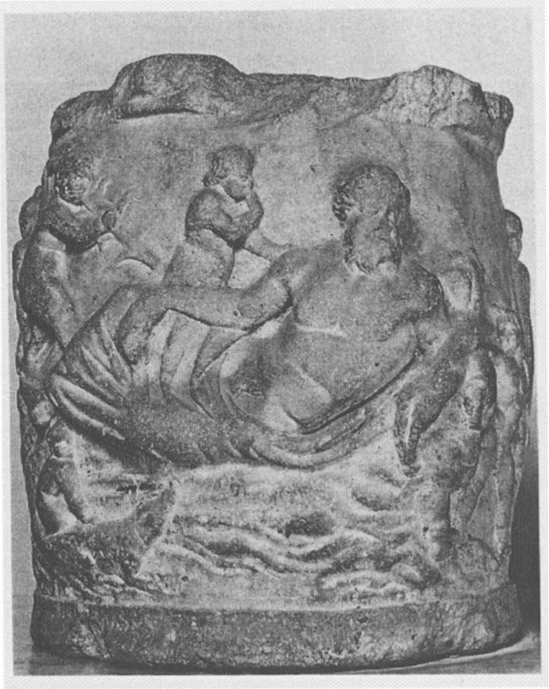
[125] Cf. *Coarelli 1994*, 236-239 for a short introduction, a ground plan and overview drawings of the stucco decorations.



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remains in the Giardino Colonna were often identified as such but not without reason doubt has recently been cast on this attribution[126]. The base with the Nilotic scene was found with the construction of the Palazzo delle Esposizioni in the 1880's and was subsequently re-used in the S. Vitale[127]. A mosaic depicting a religious ceremony (the feeding of the holy crocodiles) and the flood festivities, was also found during this construction (cat. no. 013). It is quite conceivable that both the base and the mosaic belonged to the furnishings of the same Serapeum. As long as no architectonic remains can be identified with certainty as the Serapeum, this will however remain uncertain. At the location of the rear of the present Palazzo delle Esposizioni remains of a domus have been found.

E. Caetani Lovatelli, Di una antica base marmorea rappresentante il Nilo, *BC* 8 (1880) 185-197; *Reinach 1922* (III) 214,2; *Stuart Jones*

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[126] For a detailed discussion of the Serapeum in Rome cf. Ch. IV 2.4.1.

[127] Klementa mentions that the base was found during the construction of the Palazzo delle Esposizioni. All other authors only mention the re-use in the S. Vitale.

1926, 92 sv. 28a; Ch. Hülsen, Di un relievo rappresentante il Nilo, *RendPontAccad* 9 (1933) 75-78; *Bonneau 1964*, 355; *Malaise 1972a*, 181 sv. Rome 336; *Klementa 1993*, 34 sv. A24; O. Dräger, *Religionem Significare. Studien zu reichverzierten römischen Altären und Basen aus Marmor* (1994) 229 sv. 62.

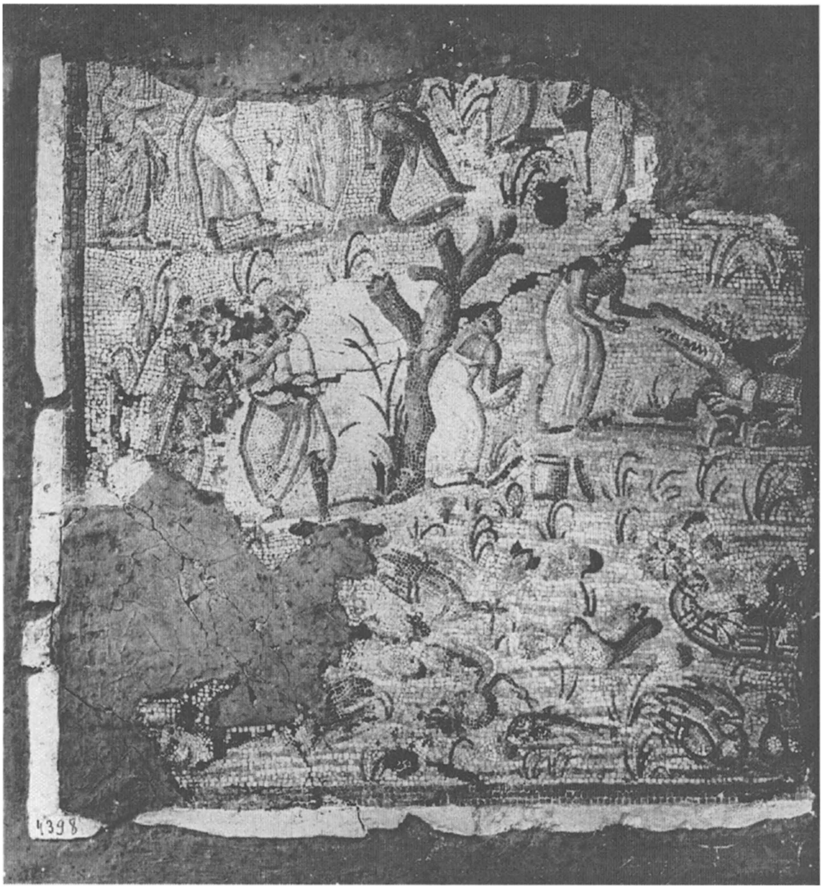
013 Rome

a. Mosaic.
b. Region VI, perhaps the object can be related to the Serapeum on the Quirinal.
c. The dimensions of the coloured mosaic are 0.46 x 0.45. The frame consists of a row of black tesserae of which only the base and left side have been preserved. At the top and the right side the picture obviously continued. Also the bottom lefthand corner has not been preserved.
d. Antiquarium Comunale, Rome.
e. Around 30 BC.

In the foreground the river, with different kinds of waterplants, fishes and birds, is depicted. From the right side a man paddles a papyrus canoe towards the riverbank. There, one can see a leafless tree with next to it two priests feeding a crocodile. Both men are wearing a garment up to the breast. One of them is actually feeding the crocodile, while the other hands over the food from a jar at his side. In front of the crocodile the hand of a third person, probably another priest, is still visible. On the other side of the three priests are two men who seem to be wearing wigs. They are holding flowers and leaves in their hands and are looking at the river. At the top of the picture dancing people are depicted. The upper part of their bodies is lost. It seems to concern a man playing a lyre (on the far left), and one woman and two men who are dancing while two other men in cloaks are looking on.

From ancient texts the feeding of the holy crocodiles from Arsinoë-Krokodeilopolis is known. As with the base now in the Vatican Museums (cat. no. 009), it seems probable that this ceremony is referred to in the picture.

Usually the mosaic is dated in the third century AD. On stylistic grounds, Werner even dates the panel more precisely in the third part of the third century AD. In a catalogue of the collections of the Antiquarium Comunale from 1994, however, an Augustan dat-



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ing is convincingly proposed on account of the size of the tesserae and the depicted elements.

As was the case with the base with a Nilotic scene (cat. no. 012), this mosaic was found with the construction of the Palazzo delle Esposizioni. It is quite conceivable, but can as yet not be proven, that both cultic representations belonged to the furnishings of the Serapeum on the Quirinal. If the mosaic should be dated in the Augustan period, it would be a case of re-use: the Serapeum only dates to the beginning of the third century AD.

BC 10 (1882) 238; *Stuart Jones 1926*, 275 sv. 14; A.M. Colini, *Antiquarium. Descrizioni delle collezione dell'antiquarium communale ampliato e riordinato* (1929) 57; M. Blake, Mosaics of the late Empire in Rome and vicinity, *MAAR* 17 (1940) 104; H. Whitehouse, *The Dal Pozzo copies of the Palestrina mosaic* (1976) 95 n. 13; *Lancha 1980*, 267 n. 20c; *Daszewski 1985*, 138 n. 5; *Werner 1994*, 236-237 sv. K 101; *Cappel 1994*, sv. U6; A.M. Sommella, C. Salvetti, *Antiquarium Comunale. Storia di un museo romano e delle sue raccolte archeologiche* (1994) 7, fig. 25 (colourplate); *Meyboom 1995*, V n. 33; *Versluys/Meyboom 2000*, 116-118, fig. 2.

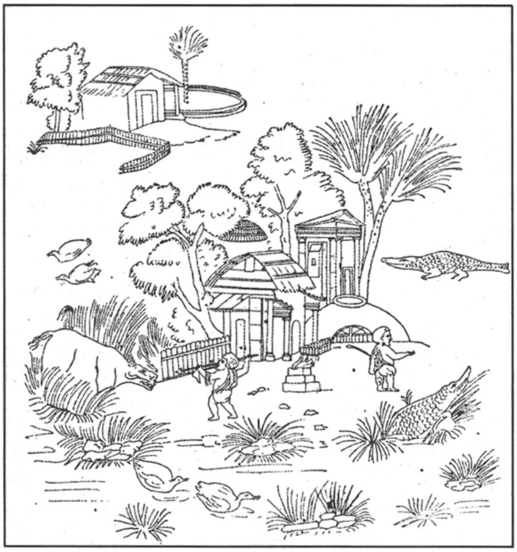
014 Rome

a. Painting.
b. Region VI, house near the baths of Constantine.
c. The painting was discovered in 1718.
d. Probably lost. Last mention of the location of the picture is Rome, Palazzo Rospigliosi. At present, however, the wall-painting can no longer be found in the collections of the palazzo Pallavicini-Rospigliosi.
e. Around 70 AD.

In the foreground a river is depicted with waterplants, two ducks and a crocodile. On a piece of land that rises from the water, a small village can be seen amid palms and other trees. An enormous amphora seems to be used as a shelter, as well as some other buildings with thatched roofs. In front of the central building, a burning altar can be distinguished. The inhabitants are depicted as dwarves who are defending themselves against a hippopotamus and a crocodile. Behind the island two ducks are swimming, while in the distance another piece of land with a small house and a palm tree can be seen in the river.

The palazzo Pallavicini-Rospigliosi is built on the spot of the ancient baths of Constantine. The fact that the painting would be included in their collection seems to confirm Turnbull's mention of the findspot. Under the remains of the thermae were recently found the remains of a domus dating to the first/second century AD, of which the painting could have been part as decoration of a nymphaeum.

G. Turnbull, *A treatise of ancient painting* (1740) tav. 41; *Reinach 1922*, 376-1; G.E. Rizzo, *Le Pitture dell'Aula Isiaca di Caligola (Palatino)* (Monumenti della pittura antica III-2, Roma) (1936) 31 sv. nota o; L.M. Connor Bulman, *Xenia Antiqua 8* (1999) 205-217, 208 (fig. 10).



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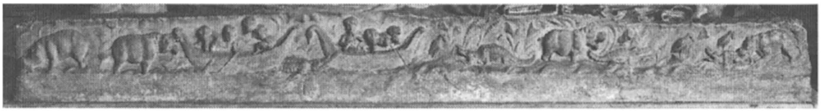
015 Rome

a. Relief.
b. Region IX, temple of Isis on the Campus Martius.
c. The base of a large statue of the reclining Nile, found in 1513, shows a frieze with a continuing Nilotic scene.
d. MV, Rome, 2300 (Chiaramonti).
e. 100-200 AD.

The front of the frieze mainly shows undulating lines indicating the water of a river. On the right some large waterplants are depicted. The picture continues on the right with two cows between large waterplants that indicate marshes and (probably) an ichneumon facing a crocodile. The rear shows two hippopotami next to a large lotus flower. One of the animals attacks a small boat with two dwarves, one of whom is defending himself in an obscene manner. In the water a crocodile attacks another boat with two dwarves. Then follow a bird and a crocodile, a hippopotamus and a crocodile, and a group of two birds, a crocodile and a hippopotamus, all behaving hostily. This continues on the left, where hostile birds, crocodiles and hippopotami are depicted between large lotus flowers and other plants.



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The statue of a reclining Nile surrounded by putti was popular from the first century AD onwards, when a large statue of this type was placed in the Templum Pacis. The example in the Vatican Museum is the oldest and best preserved copy of the type. There have been many copies, some of which apparently also had their bases decorated with a Nilotic landscape, like the much smaller statue now in the Louvre, Paris (cat. no. 026).

The temple of Isis on the Campus Martius has not been preserved but the plan and decoration of the sanctuary can be reconstructed to some extent. The statue of the Nile god was possibly erected in a large water basin which was in the southern part of the sanctuary: the real water thus continued in the sculpted water of the scene, which would have provided an amusing and lively spectacle. The semi-circular basin was surrounded by a porticus along which there were recesses in which various statues of gods were placed[128].

Lafaye 1884, 217-218; W. Amelung, *Die Sculpturen des Vatikanischen Museums* I,1 (1903) 128-131; *Adriani 1961* AII, 52-55; *Helbig*(4) no. 440; *Adriani 1970*, 28-29; *Malaise 1972a*, 194 sv. Rome 348; *LIMC* sv. pygmaioi 55; *Klementa 1993*, 24-29 sv. A14; *Lembke 1994*, 214-216 sv. E1.

016 Rome

a. Painting.
b. Regio X, 'Aula Isiaca': a room under a basilica in the Domus Flavia.
c. The wall- and ceiling-paintings in this large room were discovered in 1724 during excavations by the Farnese family. The decoration has not been well preserved but can be reconstructed with the help of drawings made at the time of the discovery. A wall painting (0.57 x 2.45) on the socle of the apse shows a Nilotic landscape. The picture has the form of a frieze but is divided into three parts by two painted column bases.

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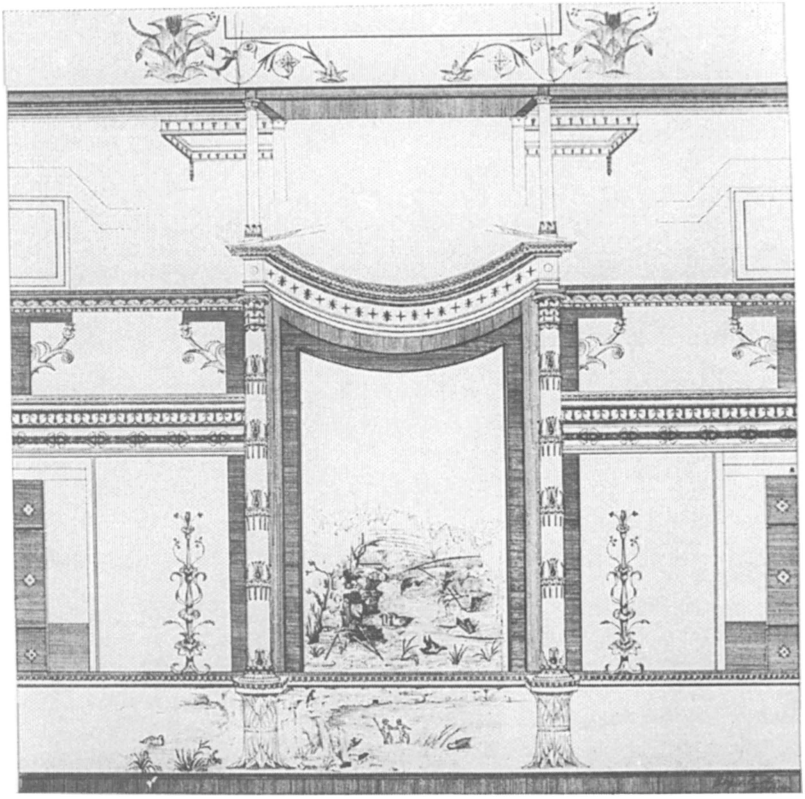
[128] See *Lembke 1994* and further Ch. IV 2.5.4.

d. In situ/Antiquarium on the Palatine, Rome.
e. 25-20 BC.

On the left a river landscape with birds is depicted. In the foreground one can distinguish the riverbank with waterplants and a large crab. After the painted column a hippopotamus can be seen swimming in the flowing waters of the river. To the left of the animal stand two dwarves, one of them is carrying a lance. Amongst the waterplants a bird is sitting on its nest. The right side of the picture, after the second painted column, is lost.



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The Nilotic landscape is not the only egyptianising element in the aptly named 'Aula Isiaca': the painted decoration shows a large number of Egyptian and egyptianising elements. However, the exact dating of the paintings to 25-20 BC almost certainly precludes a religious interpretation of the room. Coarelli assumes that the room belonged to a Republican house. The Egyptian landscape strongly resembles the one in the cubiculum in the house of Livia on the Palentine (cat. no. 017)[129].

G.E. Rizzo, *Le pitture dell'aula isiaca di Caligola (Palatino)* (Monumenti della pittura antica III-2, Roma) (1936) 26 ff.; *Borda 1958*, 52-54; *Peters 1963*, 50 ff.; *LIMC* sv. pygmaioi 42; *Cappel 1994*, sv. W4; I. Iacopi, *La decorazione pittorica dell'aula isiaca* (1997) fig. 22-23.

017 Rome

a. Paintings.
b. Region X, so-called 'Casa di Livia', ala and cubiculum.
c. The yellow frieze (A), on the wall of one of the alae, is a monochrome painting, executed in dark yellow on a lighter yellow background. The continuing picture is interrupted by painted columns. The sections between the columns measure 0.26 x 1.91. Egyptianising paintings can also be found in a cubiculum (B) on the second floor. The lower part of one of the walls consists of a dado composed of four small panels containing Nilotic scenes. Only two of these have survived well enough to make out the subjects.
d. In situ.
e. 25-15 BC.

A: the picture shows the inundated landscape of the Egyptian delta. One can distinguish small islands with shrines, travellers, a statue of Isis-Tyche, palm trees, a dromedary, towerhouses, bridges and boats. All these Egyptian details are surrounded by large volumes of water. Due to the monochrome appearance of the painting, however, this does not become immediately clear; if one pictures the river and the inundated parts coloured blue, the meaning of the painting can be seen more easily.

For an extensive description see the monographs by Rizzo and Bigalke (Bigalke, however, unjustifiably tries to deny the Egyptian character of the landscape).

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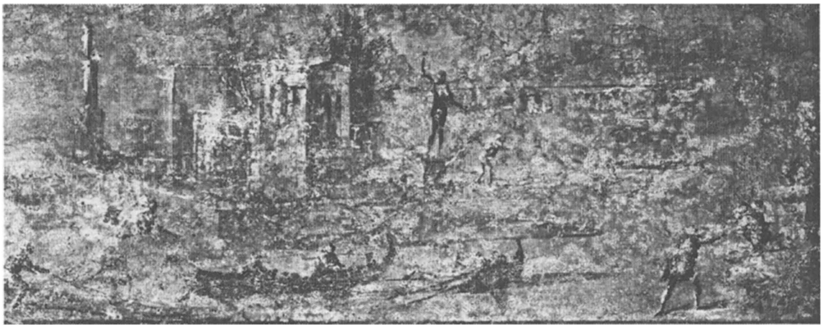
[129] *Coarelli 1994*, 173. See also H.G. Beyen, Les *domini* de la villa de la Farnesine, in: *Studia Vollgraff* (1948) 3-21, 11; *Bastet 1979*, 22-23 and *Ehrhardt 1987*, 43 ff. for the dating and Ch. IV 2.6.1 for a more detailed discussion of this context.



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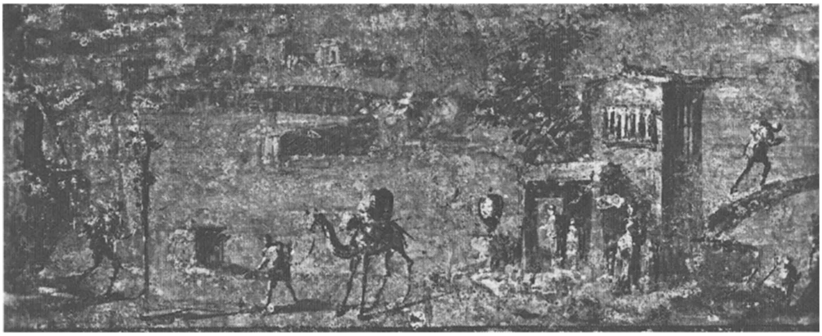
B: one panel depicts a pygmy standing in a boat leaning forward on an oar. Another panel shows a group of animals which includes a crocodile and three aquatic birds.

De Vos thinks the colour of the yellow frieze to have a symbolic significance, i.e. symbolising the *saeculum aureum*, in which case the victory over Egypt and thus the start of this 'golden age' by Octavian would be celebrated[130]. The paintings of the cubiculum on the second floor of the house have been dated in the early Second Style by Carettoni, followed by Donderer, and thus attributed to the phase of the original building of the house in the first half of the first century BC. This, however, seems improbable from a stylistic and iconographical point of view.



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The so-called 'Casa di Livia' was excavated in 1869, when the yellow frieze in one of the alae was discovered. The painted cubiculum with the Nilotic scene, on the second floor of the house, was hidden behind later alterations and was only discovered in 1951. The originally Republican house had undergone many renovations, and at the end of the first century BC, the period to which both egyptianising landscapes can be dated, it was part of the residential complex of Octavian. Egyptian and egyptianising elements can also be seen in other decorations of this complex[131].

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[130] M. De Vos, Pavone e poeta. Due frammenti di pittura parietale dell'Esquilino, in: *Le tranquille dimore degli dei*, 67-75, 67.

K. Wörmann, *Die Landschaft in der Kunst der alten Völker* (1876) 337 ff.; *Rostovtzeff 1911*, 12-22; G.E. Rizzo, *Le pitture della 'Casa di Livia' (Palatino)* (Monumenti della pittura antica III-3, Roma) (1936) 43 ff.; G. Carettoni, Una nuova pittura della Casa di Livia, in: G. Carettoni, P. Romanelli, Nuove pitture del Palatino, *BdA* 40 (1955) 210-214 (specifically concerning the cubiculum); *Schefold 1956*, 211-231; *NSc* (1957) 110-112 (specifically concerning the cubiculum); *Peters 1963*, 35-42, 47; *Moormann 1988*, 232 sv. 317/2; V. Bigalke, *Der gelbe Fries der Casa di Livia auf dem Palatin in Rom* (1990); *Meyboom 1995*, V n. 11 and index sv.; M. Donderer, Zu den Häusern des Kaisers Augustus, *MEFRA* 107-2 (1995) 621-660, 625 and n. 27.

018 Rome

a. Mosaic.
b. Region XII, villa, floor mosaic (4.05 x 4.10) of a large hall, probably a triclinium.
c. The central part of the mosaic, framed with marble, is lost. Around this central rectangular runs an almost monochrome green/black frieze showing an egyptianising marsh scene as well as an *asarotos oikos*. Only one of the four sides of this frieze has been preserved, in six pieces. The mosaic is signed by Herakleitos. There are many modern restorations[132].
d. MV, Rome, 10132. Former Laterense Collection.
e. 100-150 AD.

In both corners of the preserved side of the frieze a statue is placed: Osiris and, on the other side, Isis wearing a Hathor crown. The statue of Osiris is placed between two ducks and a lotus flower. In the water one can see lotuses, a duck on a stone, a crocodile (position not original), a frog, a fish and an ibis on a stone next to a Nilometer. Also a statue of Isis is depicted between lotuses.

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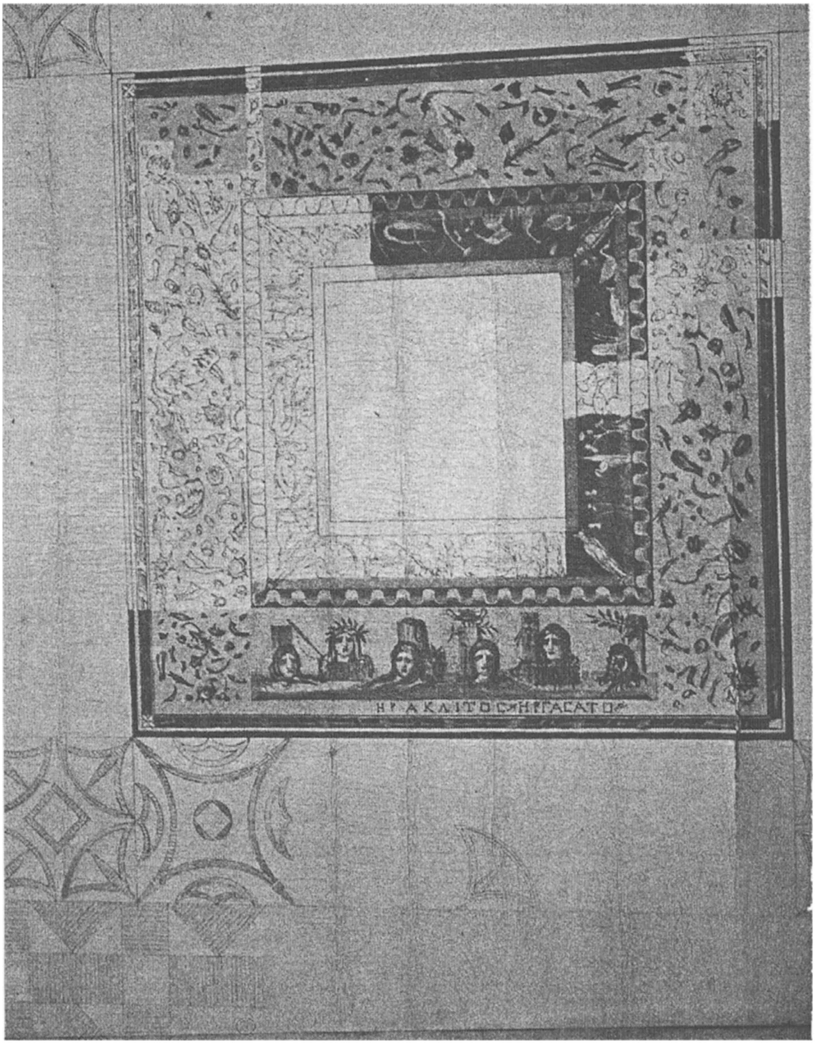
[131] Cf. Donderer (sv. no.) n. 26 for the most recent literature on the Casa di Livia and further Ch. IV 2.6.1.

[132] One of the first descriptions of the find mentions remains of water animals that would be visible in the central part, see *Werner 1998* (quoted sv. no.), also for a plan (on page 264) on which the original and restaurated parts of the mosaic are indicated.



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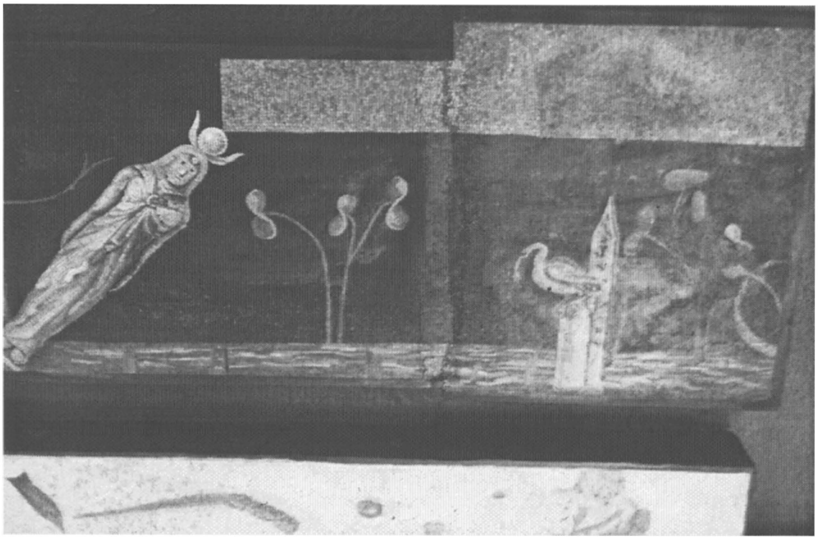
Since its discovery in 1833 at the Bastione di Sangallo, the mosaic is known as the asarotos-mosaic, based on its resemblance to a mosaic from Pergamon, called *asaroton oikos* and ascribed to a certain Sosos by Pliny[133]. The mosaic from the 'piccolo Aventino' is signed *herakleitos ergasato* and therefore is sometimes also referred to as Herakleitos-mosaic.

The dating is problematic. Allroggen-Bedell suggests the end of the second century AD or even the first half of the third century AD while De Vos proposes a date at the end of the first century AD. Werner dates the mosaic to the period of Hadrian and seems to have the most convincing arguments on his side.



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The spacious villa in region XII had a large inner courtyard with an adjacent room decorated with this exceptional floor mosaic. From the position of the room on the peristyle and the fact that the mosaic shows a floor littered with food residues, we can deduce that we are most probably dealing here with a triclinium. The villa was located on the eastern side of the Aventine, called the 'piccolo Aventino'. During the imperial period this hill was a favourite location for the wealthy inhabitants of the city. The relatively vast and, if the mosaic fragment can serve as criterion, luxuriously decorated villa confirms this[134].

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[133] On this designation and the genre named after it see the article by Moormann quoted sv. no., esp. 80-81.

[134] Trajan and Hadrian for instance lived there before they became emperor. Architectural remains have also been identified as the villa of L. Fabius Cilo, pre-

A. Nibby, Degli Orti Serviliani, *AttiPontArch* I, 6 (1835) 116; *Nogara 1910*, 3 ff.; *Helbig*(4) no. 1084; A. Allroggen-Bedel, *Maskendarstellungen in der römisch-kampanischen Wandmalerei* (1974) 85 ff., 166 ff.; *Whitehouse 1976*, 81 n. 20; *De Vos 1980*, 29-32 sv. 17; *Lancha 1980*, 268 ff.; *Werner 1994*, 120-127 sv. K46; *Meyboom 1995*, IV n. 80, n. 154; *Werner 1998*, 260-275; E.M. Moormann, La bellezza dell'immondezza. Raffigurazioni di rifiuti nell'arte ellenistica e romana, in: X. Dupré Raventós, J.A. Remolà (eds.), *Sordes Urbis. La eliminación de residuos en la ciudad romana (Actas, Roma 1996)* (2001) 75-94, esp. 83 sv. 2 (with further previous literature).

019 Rome

a. Mosaic.
b. Region XII, Vigna Maccarani, opposite S. Saba.
c. The mosaic measures 3.33 x 3.33. The central panel shows a Nilotic landscape, and is framed by eight panels with figurative representations (birds, masks and ducks) and four panels on the corners containing geometric motifs. The Nilotic landscape has many modern restorations.
d. MNR, Rome, 171. Former Museo Kircheriano.
e. 200-300 AD.

In the foreground, between rocks and large waterplants, one can see a crocodile and a hippopotamus. Above this scene a river is depicted in green and blue colours. On the left stands a nude pygmy with his hair tied in a typical lock. He is holding a spear in his right hand and the top of an amphora as a shield in his left hand. In front of him a hippopotamus is chasing two dwarves who try to escape with a raft. On the shore a pygmy is walking between large lotus flowers. He is also wearing his hair in a lock and he holds two pairs of sticks in his hands. Behind him a building with a high entrance and a roof terrace spanned by a velum is depicted. In the background one can distinguish a complex with two towers and a wall on the left. In front of the buidings different kinds of palm trees are growing and two dwarves are standing in the water, between the rocks. They are also carrying spears and the tops of amphorae as shields. One of the dwarves seems to attack a rock, but it is in fact the hind-

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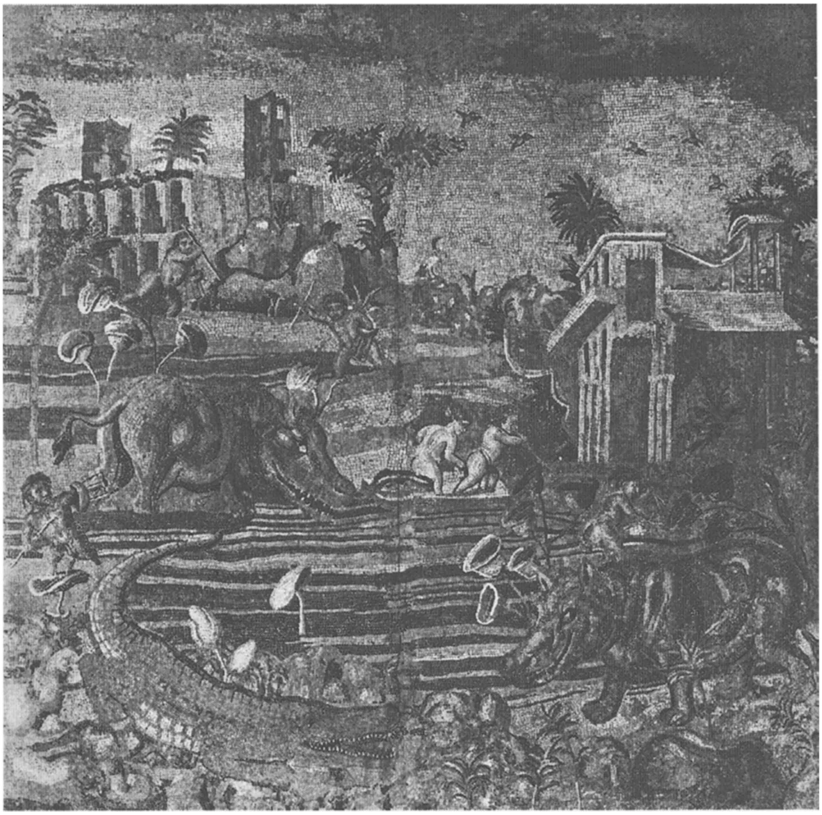
fect of Rome under Septimius Severus. See *Coarelli 1994*, 318-321, 326-327 and, in general, still, A. Merlin, *L'Aventin dans l'antiquité* (1906).



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part of a hippopotamus that has been made into a rock by restorations. On the right one can see an ibis on a rock. The sky, with four flying birds, is depicted in different colour tones.

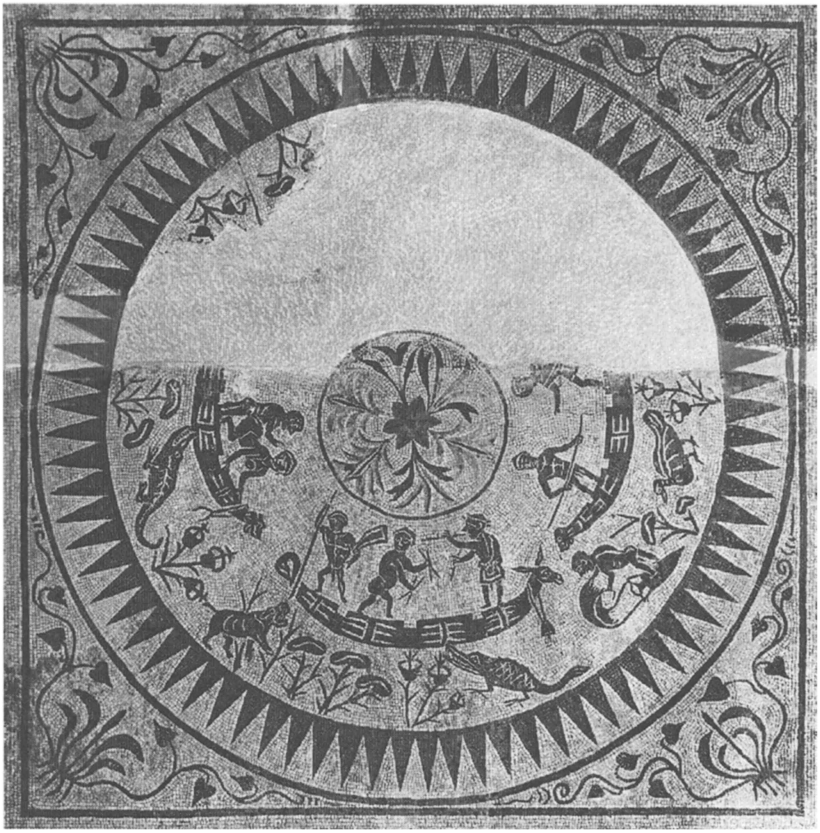
The mosaic is generally dated to the third century AD (Parlasca (in *Helbig*(4)) followed by Werner who dates it around AD 250). De Vos doubts this dating and ascribes the mosaic unconvincingly to the 'workshop of the Casa del Fauno', which was probably also responsable for the Nile mosaic of Palestrina and the egyptianising emblemata in the houses of the Menander and Paquius Proculus in Pompeii, thus suggesting a dating around 100 BC.

The context of the mosaic, found opposite S. Saba, cannot be ascertained. As mentioned before, during the entire imperial period the Aventine was a favourite location for the wealthy. The mosaic could therefore have been part of the decoration of one of the many urban villae.

P. Garucci, *BdI* (1858) 51; *Reinach 1922*, 377-1; *Rizzo 1929*, 82; E. Schmidt, *Studien zum Barberinischen Mosaik in Palestrina* (1929) 37, 49; *Blake 1936*, 124; *Van Essen 1954*, 81; *Helbig*(4) no. 2403; *De Vos 1980*, 81 and n. 215; *LIMC* sv. pygmaioi 53b; *Cappel 1994*, sv. M19; *Werner 1994*, 228-231 sv. K98.

020 Rome

a. Mosaic
b. Region XIV. The mosaic was found in 1879 on the bank of the Tiber, between the Villa della Farnesina and the Ponte Sisto.
c. The black-and-white mosaic has a round central part with a diameter of 2.4. The upper half is almost totally lost. In the corners around the central part vegetative ornaments are depicted.



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d. MNR, Rome, 125535.
e. 100-150 AD.

The lower half of the mosaic shows three papyrus canoes. The stern and prow of all three vessels are sculpted as animal heads and some are decorated with wreaths. In the first boat, on the far left, a symplegma between a standing dwarf and a forward bending woman takes place. In the water a crocodile can be seen swimming amongst large lotus flowers. There are three pygmies in the second boat, one of whom is defending himself against a hippopotamus with a punting pole, another one is playing a double oboe, and the third one dances with two pairs of sticks in his hands. A crocodile, again depicted next to large lotus flowers, also seems to attack the boat. In the boat on the far right a dwarf with a punting pole in his hands stands on the stern. In the middle of the vessel stands another dwarf. The remaining part of the picture is lost. In the foreground the river is indicated by different kinds of lotus plants and a duck. Also a pygmy sailing an amphora is depicted.

Nothing is known about the context of this Nilotic mosaic, that was found on the banks of the Tiber. In imperial times this area was used as wine storage space[135]. Remarkable is the iconography of a dwarf sailing an amphora; also depicted in the large mosaic from Collemancio (cat. no. 081).

NSc (1879) 180; *Van Essen 1954*, 85; *Helbig*(4) no. 2481; *Cèbe 1966*, 350; *Malaise 1972a*, 232 sv. Rome 427; *LIMC* sv. pygmaioi 51; *Cappel 1994*, sv. M11; M. Bertinetti, I mosaici del MNR. Progetti di restauro e predisposizione, in : *II colloquio AISCOM, Roma 1994. Atti* (1995) 249-261; *Versluys/Meyboom 2000*, fig. 3.

021 Rome

a. Paintings.
b. Region XIV, Colombarium Villa Doria Pamphili.
c. The colombarium consists of one L-shaped subterranean room. At regular distances from each other rows of niches have been cut into the wall. The paintings are located between these rows and have an average height of about 0.20. After the discovery of the tomb, most paintings were taken out and transported to

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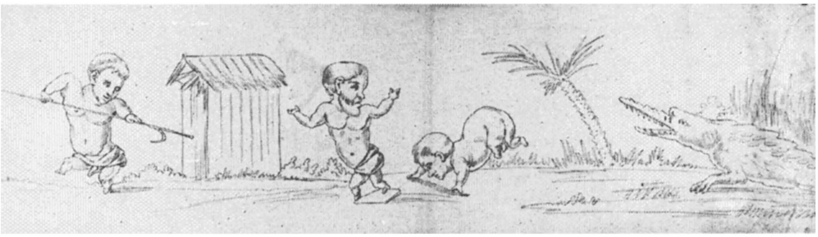
[135] The *cellae vinariae*, named after an inscription found there. Cf. *Coarelli 1994*, 333.

the MNR.
d. MNR, Rome.
e. 25-0 BC.

The pictures do not form part of a continuing frieze; it concerns different panels with different kinds of subjects. In total, about 135 scenes can be reconstructed, amongst them 13 egyptianising water landscapes: simple Nilotic landscapes with dwarves, ducks and other Nilotic fauna, and lotuses.



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The paintings in the colombarium, found in the grounds of the Villa Doria Pamphili, show yet more egyptianising elements. Apart from the 13 Nilotic scenes, six egyptianising dwarf scenes have been preserved, as well as a number of scenes showing an erotic dance, which can be related with the flood festivities. Thus of a total of 135 preserved scenes about 20% have an egyptianising character[136].

In 1984 was discovered the columbarium of C. Scribonius Menophilus, comparable to the columbarium Villa Doria Pamphili. The remaining decorations show, amongst other things, scenes with pygmies and landscapes[137].

E. Santer, La pitture parietali del colombario di Villa Pamphili, *RM* 8 (1893) 105-144; *Rostovtzeff 1911*, 26-29; *Reinach 1922*, 117-3, 316-4, 6, 7; G. Bendinelli, *Le pitture del Colombario di Villa Pamphili* (Monumenti della pittura antica III-5, Roma) (1941); *Helbig*(4) no. 2490; *Peters 1963*, 55-58; *Cèbe 1966*, 349 ff.; *LIMC* sv. pygmaioi 43; R. Ling,

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[136] For the erotic paintings and the kynaidoi occuring there cf. A. Maiuri, Due singolari dipinti Pompeiani, *RM* 60-61 (1953-54) 88-99 and, most recently, R.J. King, Dancers in the columbarium of villa Doria Pamphili, in: D. Scagliarini Corlàita (ed.), *I temi figurativi nella pittura parietale antica. Atti del VI convegno internazionale sulla pittura parietale antica* (Bologna 1995) (1996) 77-80, who seems to be unaware of the Nilotic background of the paintings. Cf. for the colombarium in general the mentioned article by Ling (with previous literature).

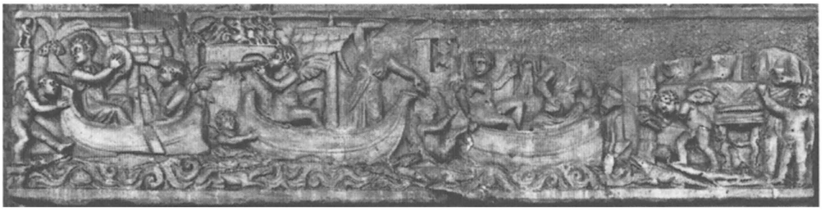
[137] Cf. *Feraudi-Gruénais* 2001, 43-45 sv. K 11.

The paintings of the Colombarium of Villa Doria Pamphili, in: *Moormann 1993*, 127-135; *Cappel 1994*, sv. W5; *Feraudi-Gruénais 2001*, 40-43 sv. K 10.

022 Rome

a. Relief.
b. Extra muros: Via Ostiense, tomb 'in località Montefinocchio'.
c. Decoration of a sarcophagus of white marble (0.45 x 1.94) found in 1930. The relief on the front has only been partly preserved.
d. MNR, Rome, 113065.
e. 250-275 AD.

Three boats sail on a river. The water of the river is clearly indicated in the foreground by undulating lines with swimming crocodiles. On the boat on the left in the picture a woman is playing a tambourine, while a psyche tends the scull. Another psyche on the river bank seems to pull the vessel ashore. On the second boat a psyche is playing a double oboe. Next to her a woman with krotalistrata in her hands dances to the music. A second psyche has fallen in the water and grabs the prow to try and escape from the crocodile. In the third boat again a psyche and a woman are sitting, while another psyche hangs onto the prow with a crocodile in the water below her. On the right of the picture and in the background the riverbank with buildings and people is depicted. The continuing right side of the picture shows, after a large palm tree, a symposion with two psychai in the foreground. One of them is fishing, the other one holds a cup in her hands. In the background one can distinguish (from left to right) a statue on a pillar, a palm tree, a building, another palm tree, an arch with statues on top and buildings in which a female figure and an Egyptian priest are depicted: probably a temple of Isis. The left side shows another boat with a psyche, while on the right side a fishing psyche can be distinguished.



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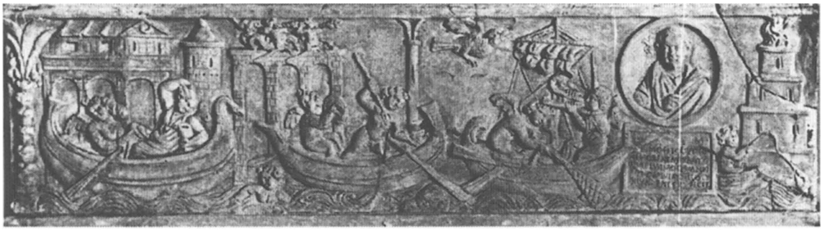
Helbig(4) no. 2121; A. Giuliano (ed.), *Museo Nazionale Romano. Le sculture* I, 8 parte 1 (1985) 39-43 sv. I, 13.

023 Rome

a. Relief.
b. Extra muros: Via Ostiense, tomb.
c. Decoration of a sarcophagus that was used for a child. A portrait of the boy is depicted in the clipeus; below the portrait an inscription mentions his name: Julius Filocyrius. The boy is depicted with a typical 'earlock', the iconographical feature of Harpocrates.
d. Former Palazzo Vacari, Rome. Presently missing.
e. 250-300 AD.

Three boats are sailing a river. On the boat on the left in the picture a woman lies in a graceful pose while a psyche is tending the scull. Another psyche probably fell off the vessel and is swimming in the water. On a second boat, one psyche plays a tambourine, while another is pointing his harpoon towards the water. On the third boat, with hoisted sails, two psychai are engaged in fishing and playing a double oboe. In the background the presence of a city is indicated. Also a large palm tree (far left) and a flying bird can be distinguished. To the right of the clipeus, a psyche in a small boat is fishing with a fishing rod. On the river bank a large pharos is depicted.



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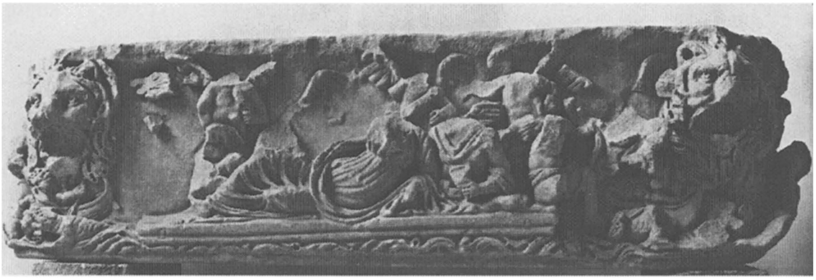
In his description, Leclant mentions crocodiles in the water. Malaise distinguishes a temple of Isis in the background.

G.L. Visconti, *BC* 1 (1872-1873) 263-267; J. Leclant, Un relief pannonien d'inspiration égyptisante, *RA* (1950) 147-149; V. von Gonzenbach, *Untersuchungen zu den Knabenweihen im Isiskult der römischen Kaiserzeit* (1957) 147-148 sv. K16; *Malaise 1972a*, 71 sv. 17; *L'image du Noir*, fig. 375.

024 Rome

a. Relief
b. Extra muros.
c. A small sarcophagus is decorated on all four sides with a Nilotic landscape. The corners of the front, which has been badly preserved in the upper part, show two large lion heads.
d. Antiquarium on the Palatine, Rome.
e. 250-300 AD.

The front shows a symposion at the river that is taking place on a platform; to the left and right crocodiles and boating psychai are depicted. On the platform itself a reclining man and woman can be distinguished. In the background one can see several psychai.



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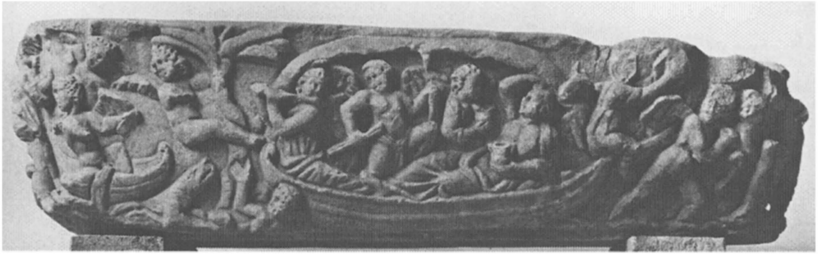
The back shows a small boat with a psyche on the left. In front of her swims a crocodile that threatens another psyche who has fled into a palm tree. A third psyche swims in the water next to a large boat. On the vessel, under a velum, a symposion is taking place. A woman makes music and a psyche is dancing, while another woman offers a drink to a reclining man. On the prow a person is sitting with a tambourine. The boat is pulled forward by several psychai who are depicted on the right.



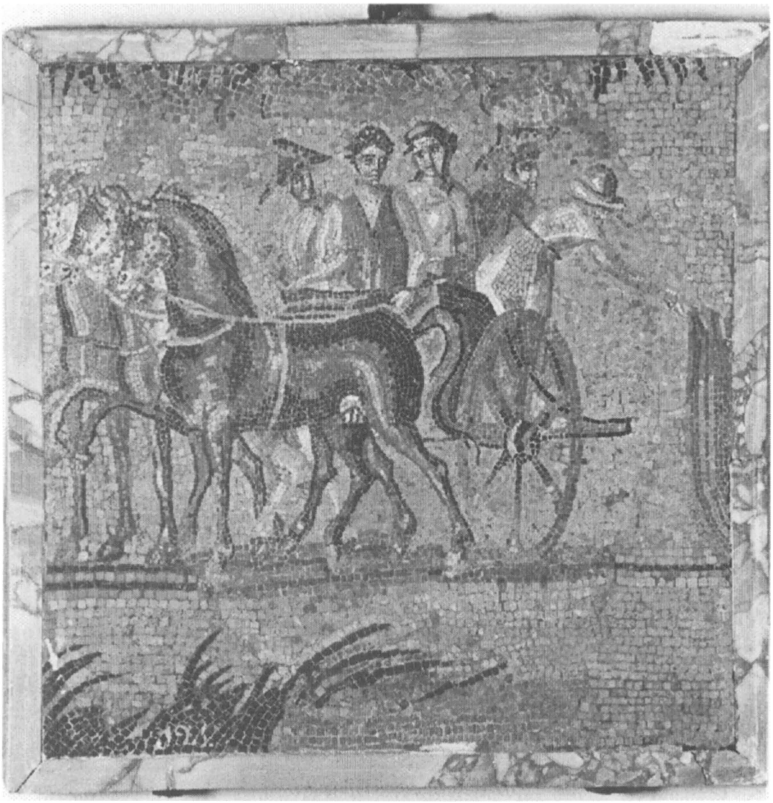
33

I. Iacopi, *BArte* 60 (1975) 75 ff.

025 Rome

a. Mosaic.
b. Unknown.
c. The three fragments do not fit together but surely derive from the same, probably quite large, pavement. The two largest fragments (fragment 1: 0.43 x 0.44 and fragment 2: 0.53 x 0.58) show antique restorations, the third fragment (0.29 x 0.16) does not.
d. Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid, 3605-3607. Former Massimi Collection, Rome.
e. Around 100 BC.

The first fragment shows five people on a quadriga, standing on a piece of land that rises from the water. A young couple resemble



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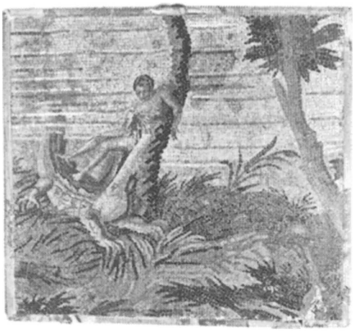
Dionysos and Ariadne; the other three persons seem to be servants or slaves. On the second fragment a man is devoured by a crocodile. In the background the river is visible and in the foreground a swamp with a large lotus flower. The third fragment probably shows two slaves or labourers pouring grain into a basin next to a river.

For a detailed description and interpretation see *Versluys 2000.*

Lacking further information, we have to assume for this large Nilotic mosaic, of which only three fragments have been preserved, a provenance from Rome or the surrounding area of the city. Lanciani reconstructed as its context a pavilion near Nero's Domus Aurea, but there is as yet not enough evidence for this attribution.



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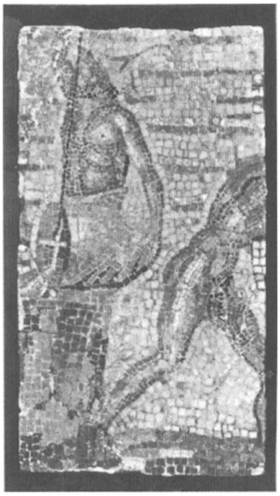

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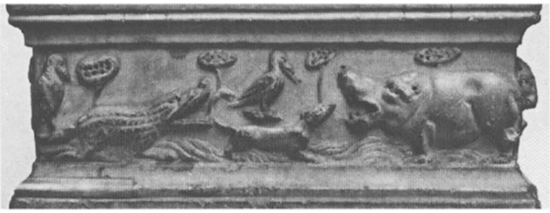
In a recent publication of the Dal Pozzo drawings of the three fragments, Whitehouse (also) supposes that the fragments belong to one, quite extensive, pavement that would combine a number of figure groups within a typical Nile landscape. She, however, suggests a Hadrianic dating to this pavement and sees depicted a water-lifting device on the third fragment.

R. Lanciani, Le *picturae antiquae cryptarum romanarum*, *BC* ser. 4, 23 (1895) 175-176; H. Whitehouse, The rebirth of Adonis, *BSR* 63 (1995) 215-243, 224 n. 22; *Versluys 2000* (with further previous literature); H. Whitehouse, *Ancient mosaics and wallpaintings. The paper museum of Cassiano dal Pozzo* (Series A, part 1) (2001) 179-185 sv. 40-42.

026 Rome

a. Relief
b. Unknown.
c. Relief sculpted on the base of a statue of the reclining Nile.
d. Louvre, Paris, MA 4579. Former Albani collection.
e. 100-200 AD.

The front side shows a bird standing on the tail of a crocodile. In the background a large, opened lotus flower is depicted; in the foreground the water of a river is clearly visible. In front of the crocodile another bird and an ichneumon can be seen, facing a hippopotamus. In the background three lotuses are visible. The picture continues on the right with two large lotus flowers in the water, and a bull and a lotus flower in the background.



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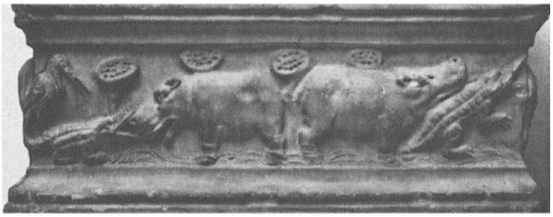
The back shows crocodiles fighting with hippopotami. On the left a bird stands on the tail of a crocodile that bites the snout of a hippopotamus. On the right a hippopotamus attacks a fleeing crocodile. In the background again lotuses are depicted. The left side, finally, shows a hippopotamus with bent head and open mouth in the water next to a large lotus flower.



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Based on the presence of the statue in the Albani collection, a provenance of Rome or the immediate vicinity of the city may be assumed.

A. Adriani, *Repertorio* A II (1961) 56-57; *Klementa 1993*, sv. A 17 (with further previous literature).

027 Rome

Campana reliefs

These terracotta plates with figurative representations, particularly popular in Roman house decoration at the end of the first century BC and the first centuries AD, are named after the 19th century collector G.P. Campana who was the first to collect and publish a large collection of these objects[138]. Campana plates are an Italian phenomenon and most of them come from the city of Rome. Scenes with a Nilotic landscape seen through arches were popular and many examples in various variations have been preserved. Other Nilotic themes also occur.

The plates, made in series and often painted, were decorated in relief with a mould. Apparently there were stamps for separate elements, which may explain the similarity in composition and the differences in the separate elements (crocodile, reed huts, dwarves, etc.). Campana plates with Nilotic subjects are mainly top plates that were inserted in walls or set into supports, in which case they suggested a view onto an exotic landscape behind it. It must be noted that such an architectural framing of Campana plates only occurs in case of the Nilotic landscapes. As such they fit well into the style of decorating that became popular with the emerge of the so-called Second Style, in which 'Durchblicksarchitektur' was en vogue.

Only recently, Rauch published an extensive catalogue of this material together with interpretive paragraphs on dating, iconography, and other aspects[139]. Her catalogue is by far the most detailed and complete and is thus referred to here without being repeated. On the basis of 146 (often only fragmentary preserved) examples Rauch distinguishes three types. The first type, by far the most popular, shows a double arch with a view on a Nile landscape with straw huts, Egyptian fauna and flora and pygmies in a boat. Type I occurs in three different variations that concern the left arcade: most of the time a bird on a fence is depicted (Ia) or a lying woman seen on the back (Ib), while also a man rushing to the left is sometimes depicted (Ic). On formal grounds Rauch even reconstructs a slighty altered, chronological later phase with type Ia and Ib ("Umbildung"). The second type shows three arches with egyptianising scenes: a farmer driving a donkey, a personification of the river Nile and a symposion. The third type shows three arches with dancing *cinaedoi*. The largest part of the material can be dated in the Augustan period. The three types will be illustrated below by the description of a well-preserved example:

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[138] For Campana reliefs in general cf. G.P. Campana, *Antichi opere in plastica discoperta, raccolta e dichiarata da G.P. Campana* (1824); *Von Rohden/Winnefeld 1911*; A.H. Borbein, *Campanareliefs. Typologische und stilkritische Untersuchungen* (1968); S. Tortorella, Le lastre campana. Problemi di produzione e di iconografia, in: *L'art décoratif à Rome à la fin de la république et au début du principat* (1981); R. Perry, *Die Campanareliefs. Katalog der Sammlung antiker Kleinkunst des Archäologischen Instituts der Universität Heidelberg* (1996) and *Rauch 1999*.

[139] *Rauch 1999* with most previous literature. Important publications before 1999: *Von Rohden/Winnefeld 1911*, 155 ff. ("Nilbilder"); *Kern 1958*; *Cappel 1994*, 49-54 and 124-126; M. Moltesen, Hvor Nilen vander aegypterens jord ..., *Meddelelser fra Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek 53* (1997) 102-125.

I Louvre, Paris, Cp 4203
The picture is divided by two arches supported by columns with corinthian capitals. At the top runs a frieze, supported by pilasters, that are rendered before the columns. Through the left arch an Egyptian landscape with a simple round hut with an ibis sitting on top is visible[140]. Next to it a naked woman is lying on a kind of stibadion. She holds a cup in her hand and looks up to an ityphallic herme next to her. Two stairs lead to the river where a crocodile and a hippopotamus stand amid waterplants. Through the right arch a rectangular hut with two ibises sitting on the thatched roof is visible, while the river with ducks, a crocodile and a boat with two dwarves is indicated in the foreground.
Rauch 1999, sv. N69.

II MNR, Rome, 58192
Arches divide the picture into three parts. Through the left arch one can see a man leading his amphorae-carrying donkey. In the centre arch an old man stands in front of an object that is probably an altar but might also be a schematically indicated Nilometer; also a crocodile is depicted. Through the right arch one can see three symposiasts being attacked by a crocodile.
Helbig(4) no. 2164i; *Adriani 1959*, 28-29; *Klementa 1993*, 38 sv. A 32; *Rauch 1999*, sv. N106.

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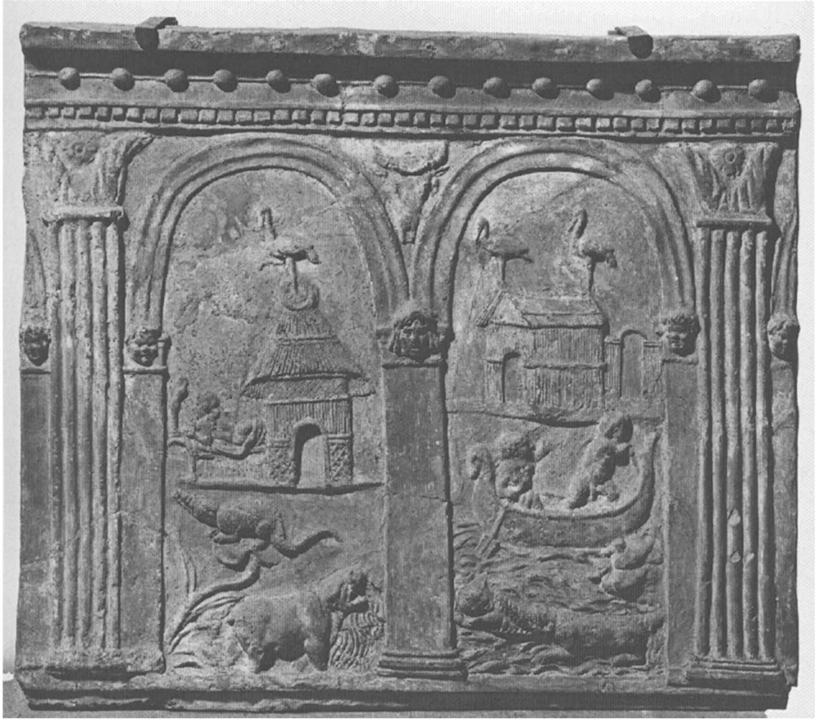
[140] In many publications (also *Kern 1958*) these birds are referred to as storks. However, in view of the Nilotic context, the intention must have been to depict the (more) typical Egyptian ibises, as is more clearly visible in other examples. For the ibis in Nilotic landscapes cf. Ch. III 4.1.3.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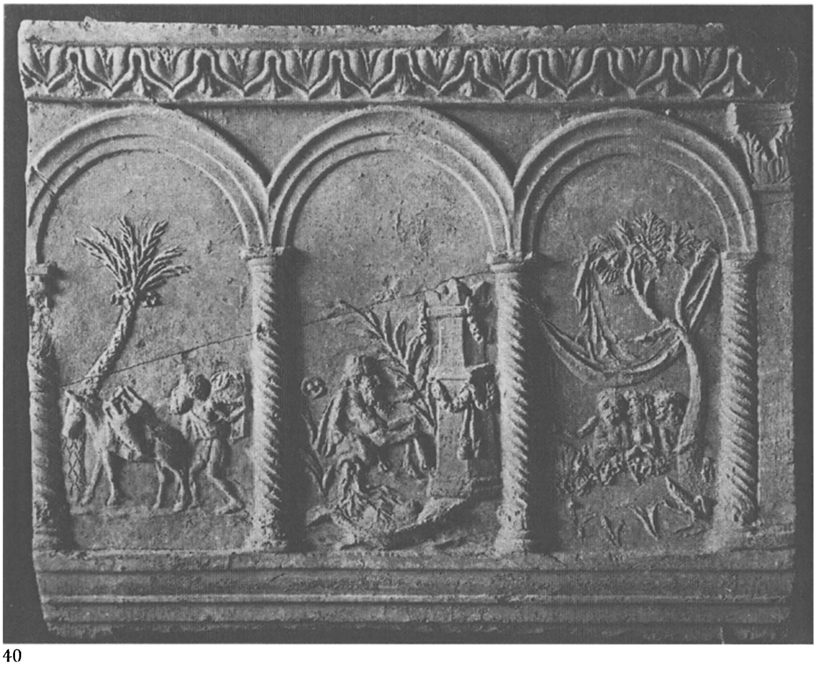
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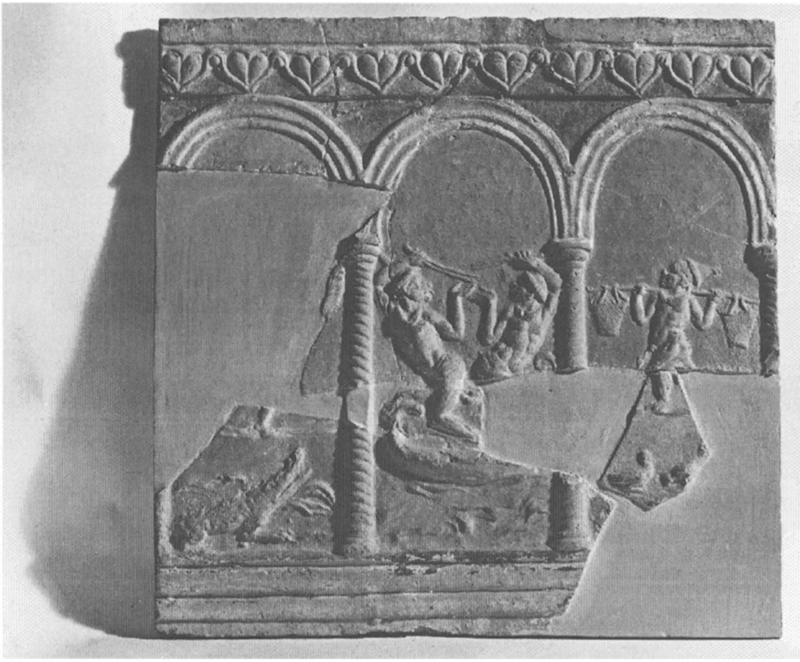
III Louvre, Paris, S 827
The only partly preserved picture is divided by three arches. Through the left arch (largely lost) one can distinguish a crocodile in the water. In the centre arch a boat with two dancing men is depicted. They are carrying clubs and are wearing conical hats. In the right arch two dancing men with the same kind of conical hats are depicted with a carrying stick over their shoulders. In the river two ducks are swimming.



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J. Lindsay, *Leisure and pleasure in Roman Egypt* (1965) 292; *Rauch 1999*, sv. N115.

1.2 Campania

1.2.1 *Boscoreale*

028 Boscoreale

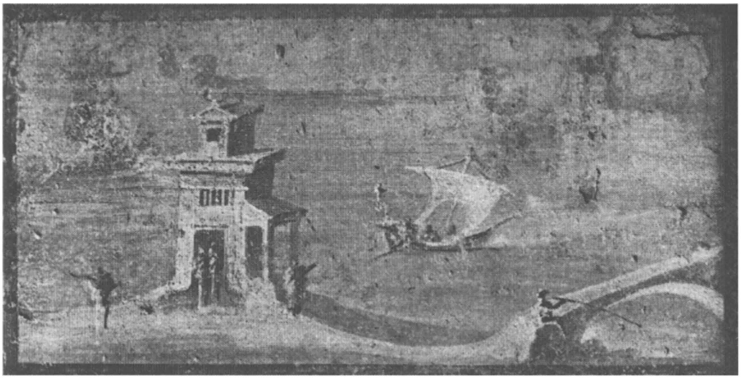
a. Painting.
b. Villa 'fondo Zurlo', triclinium.
c. Room B, probably a triclinium, showed six egyptianising land-

scapes (all 0.32 x 0.61) placed in yellow panels which decorated the central part of three walls. During the excavation of the villa in 1897 the landscapes were cut away and sold off. Two have disappeared, the remaining four are in the Louvre and the British Museum.

d. Lost (B and F); Louvre, Paris, P 25 & 24 (C and E); BM, London (A and D).

e. Around 70 AD.

A (north wall): landscape with a villa and other architecture. On the left a wood enclosed by a wall is visible.
B (north wall): landscape.
C (east wall, left side): a river with two boats can be seen. At the riverside are several buildings. In the foreground three men with a large fishing net are depicted.
D (east wall, right side): a tower-like structure and four people are depicted next to a river with a boat; also a bridge with an angler is visible.



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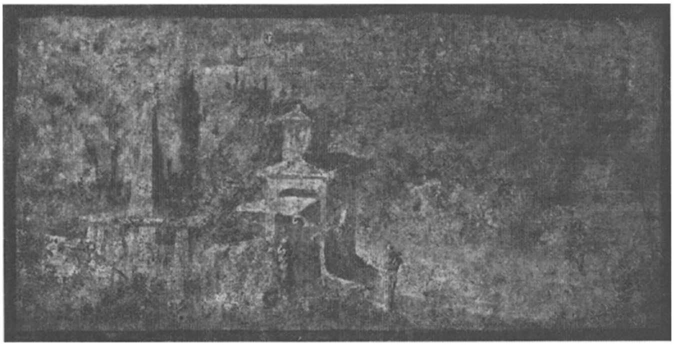
E (south wall, left side): the right side of the picture shows the river depicted in green and blue colours. On the water sails a boat with four people on board. On the left side of the picture the river bank with buildings and vegetation can be seen. Within a surrounding wall a small, high pyramid placed on a base is depicted, as well as people standing in front of a house with an aedicula and a velum above the entrance. Behind or within this building are growing palms, sycamores and a cypress.



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F (south wall, right side): landscape with villae and other buildings next to the river.

The villa 'fondo Zurlo', named after the owner of the plot of land where the remains of the complex were found, was located just outside Boscoreale. We are dealing here with a peristyle villa with a strong agricultural character, where five skeletons, some jewellery and household goods were found[141].

A. Sogliano, *NSc* (1897) 396; *Rostovtzeff 1911*, 78-79; R. Carrington, Studies in the Campanian 'Villae Rusticae', *JRS* 21 (1931) 128 sv. n. 14; R.P. Hinks, *Catalogue of the Greek, Etruscan and Roman paintings and mosaics in the British Museum* (1933) 12 sv. P 19 & 20; V. Tran Tam Tinh, *Catalogue des peintures romaines (Latium et Campanie) du Musée du Louvre* (1974) 49-51 sv. 26 & 27; *De Vos 1980*, 68-69 sv. 27b-1; A. Oettel, *Fundcontexte römischer Vesuvvillen im Gebiet um Pompeji. Die Grabungen von 1894 bis 1908* (1996) 193-195 sv. Kat. Nr. 2.

1.2.2 *Herculaneum*

029 Herculaneum

a. Painting.
b. Unknown.
c. The frieze-form painting is damaged by two cracks in the middle. The colours have faded.

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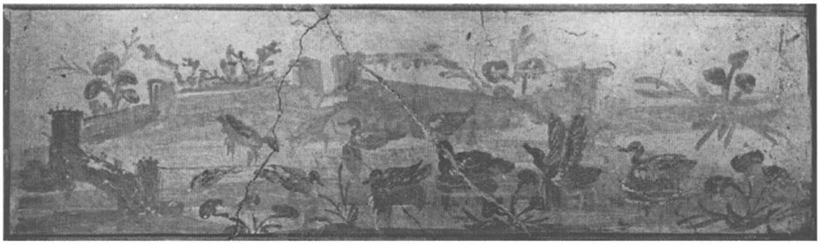
[141] All information on the complex has been collected by Oettel. Cf. his pages 19, 65-67, 132-136 and 193-195.

d. MN, Naples, 9729.
e. Around 70 AD.

In the foreground a river with lotuses and ducks is depicted. Though only sketched, the ducks look lively and realistic. On the left and in the background are towers connected by a wall. Behind the wall grow very large lotus flowers, as well as other vegetation.



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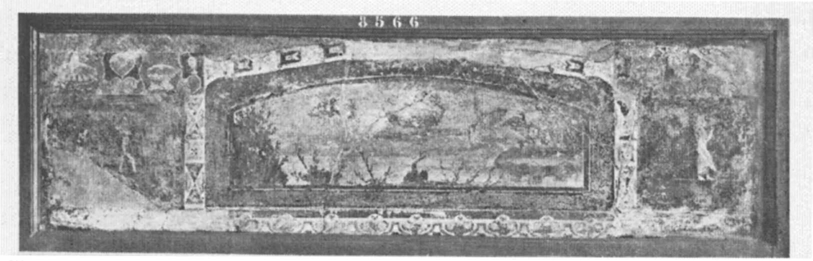
Unpublished.

030 Herculaneum

a. Painting.
b. Unknown.
c. The frieze, placed in the upper zone of the wall, consisted of small scenes with a religious egyptianising character, alternated with tableaux showing birds flanking an alabastron (MN 8515), a Nilotic scene (MN 8566) or masks (MN 9814). The dimensions of the panel with the Nilotic scene, which has been badly preserved, are 0.3 x 1.10.
d. MN, Naples, 8566.
e. Around 35-45 AD.

In the foreground and on the right side of the picture a river bank with some trees and buildings is visible. A pergola can be clearly discerned. On the water a small boat with dwarves is sailing among some ducks.

A picture of the Nilotic panel was first published in the *Pitture di Ercolano*. However the reproduction of the original is wrong: one can distinguish on the water an empty boat and a floating sarcophagus. Hence, Elia thought that the finding of Osiris by Isis was depicted, as in a painting from the Pompeian Iseum. De Vos also published the drawing from the *Pitture*, however without a correct description of the original. Tran Tam Tinh published a photograph of the origi-



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nal, on which the ducks can be clearly seen, and Meyboom gives a correct description.

The frieze shows a combination of egyptianising religious motifs, masks and (at least) one Nilotic landscape. A similar combination of elements can be seen in the Villa dei Misteri (cat. no. 067) and on the so-called asaratos mosaic from Rome (cat. no. 018)[142].

Pitture di Ercolano II, 87 ('vignetta'), 243; *Helbig 1868*, 1094b; *Reinach 1922*, 160; *Elia 1941*, 4; *Tran Tam Tinh 1971*, 89-90 sv. 63; *De Vos 1980*, 22-23 sv. 11; *Meyboom 1995*, IV n. 97.

1.2.3 *Pompeii*

031 Pompeii

a. Painting.
b. I 2, 24, tablinum.
c. The painting is located on the dado of the walls at the north and east side of the room. The Nilotic motifs have been badly preserved and are nowadays hardly visible.
d. In situ.
e. 0-10 AD.

The socle of the north wall shows waterplants and an ibis. The remaining parts of the socle of the east wall seem to show a building.

The remains of house I 2, 24 are largely overgrown and nowadays not accessible for study. It is a modest house near the 'porta di Stabia', which was only used as *caupona* after AD 62. Mau remarks that in the same tablinum there were paintings with a Dionysiac theme. The painting with Nilotic motifs in miniature resembles similar paintings on the predella of a wall in the black tablinum in the Villa dei Misteri (cat. no. 067).

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[142] As already noted by De Vos (sv. no.), who also includes the Villa della Farnesina (cf. appendix) in the comparison.

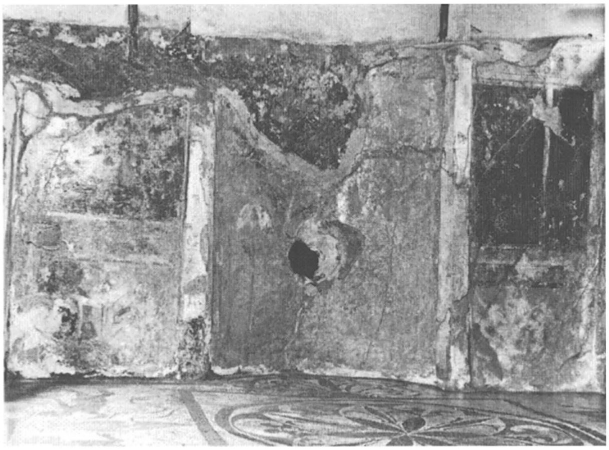
A. Mau, *BdI* (1873) 246; *De Vos 1979*, 91 sv. n. 86; *Pompei* I, 53-54.

032 Pompeii

a. Painting.
b. I 6, 2 (Casa del Criptoportico), caldarium.
c. The upper zone of the north wall of the caldarium consisted of a niche that was decorated with a simple marsh scene. Today only the lower part of the wall has been preserved.
d. Lost.
e. Around 30 BC.

A duck and a crocodile could be seen swimming among waterplants.

The Casa del Criptoportico was being renovated in AD 79. It is a large house that originally was joined to the adjacent Casa del Sacello Iliaco (I 6, 4). In the period to which the Nilotic scene can be dated, they formed one very large complex with a double atrium and a sizeable peristyle. In this peristyle was a private bath on the east side, which consisted of amongst other things, a hypocaustum, an apodyterium and a frigidarium. Separately in the southwest corner was a small caldarium, the apse of which was decorated with a Nilotic landscape in the upper part.



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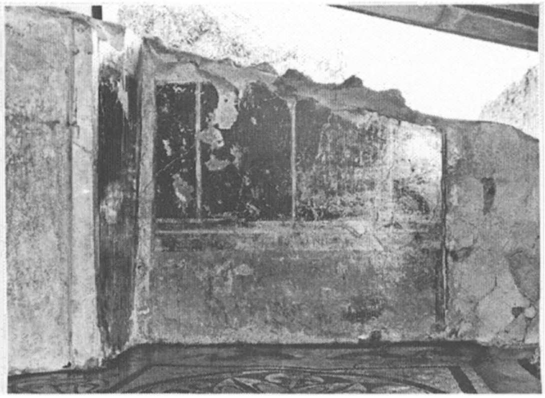
The socles of the walls of this room were decorated with waterplants against a yellow background and therefore seem to be connected with the Nilotic scene.



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The floor of the room is decorated with a black and white mosaic which shows swimming, ityphallic Blacks. This completes the evocation of the Nile swamps. The user of the room sat amongst waterplants and could see everywhere around him the Nile with its characteristic features, such as black Egyptians, ducks and crocodiles. It is worth noting that more egyptianising elements have been preserved in the decoration of the private bath: in the apodyterium is a painted sphinx, and on the west wall of the frigidarium remains have been preserved of a monochrome landscape, indicated as 'paesaggio sacrale', which can also be dated to approximately 30 BC. One of the remains shows an Egyptian towerhouse behind which a palm tree is growing; we can assume that the entire landscape probably had an egyptianising character. Orientalising in a more general sense is a room on the peristyle where two large elephants with putti are depicted[143].

A. Maiuri, *NSc* (1933) 252-276; *Beyen* II,1, 85, 118; *Spinazzola 1953*, 466; *Schefold 1957*, 22; M. De Vos, *MededRom* 37 (1975) 70; *Pompei* I, 193-195; *Meyboom 1995*, 83, V n. 16.

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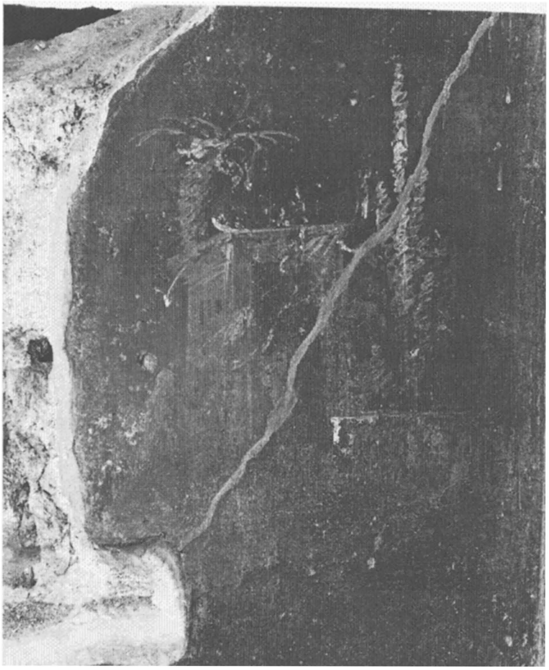
[143] For the Casa del Criptoportico see *Spinazzola 1953*, 437-593 and 869-970; *Beyen* II,1, 82-119 and a short summary in *La Rocca/De Vos* 1994, 205-210 and *Pompei* (sv. no.).



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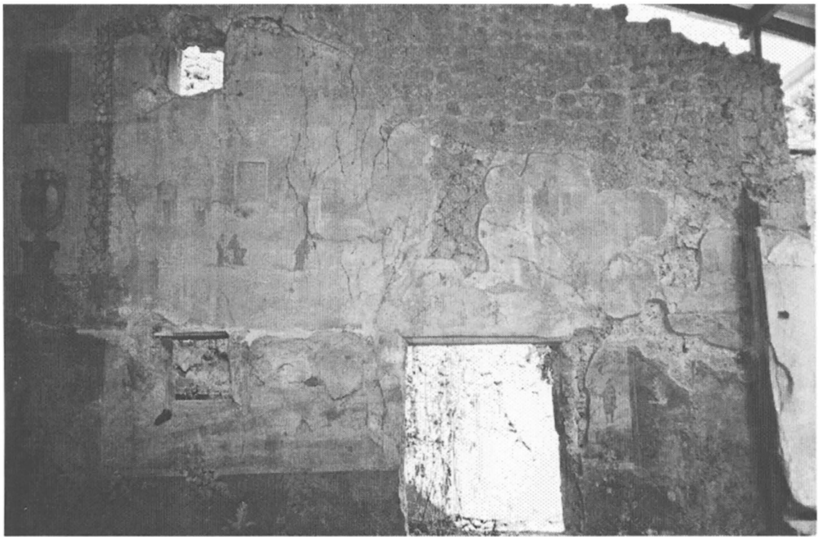
033 Pompeii

a. Painting.
b. I 6, 15 (Casa dei Ceii), viridarium.
c. The large paintings can be found on the east and west walls of the viridarium. The painting on the east wall is relatively well preserved and provides a view onto a so-called sacred landscape with an egyptianising character. The painting on the west wall is less well preserved and shows a pygmy landscape.
d. In situ.
e. Around 70 AD.

A (east wall): the landscape consists of pieces of land that emerge from the water. In the background one can distinguish on the left a pavilion in front of a group of trees surrounded by a wall; also an altar and a sacred tree are visible. Behind the pavilion another island and a sailing boat are depicted; in front a man and a woman are seated, while another woman is walking to the right. Further to the front, a spit of land with a tree, an Egyptian altar, a statue of Priapus and two women are depicted. The centre shows a mountain with rich vegetation and offerings. Next to it, on the right side, stands a temple within an enclosure, with three women and a child in front of it. In the foreground a traveller is depicted with a stick and a jug in his hands.



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B (west wall): the central part of the picture, which is gone in the upper part, shows an island with (sacral) buildings. In front of it stand several armed pygmies; two pygmy soldiers are fighting. In the foreground, on another plot of land, a large Egyptian altar is visible. Next to the altar a hippopotamus is being attacked by a pygmy. Also some ibises are depicted, while a crocodile is swimming in the water. In the background, on the right side of the picture, another plot of land is visible which can be reached by a fallen palm tree which serves as bridge. In the water a boat with pygmies, ducks and lotuses are depicted.

For detailed information and a comprehensive description see *Michel 1990.*

Although the Ceii were an old Pompeiian family, the Case dei Ceii is a modest house with a small inside garden. A fountain was placed in this viridarium which was connected to a small canal that transversed the room. The east and west walls of this area are decorated with two very different Nilotic landscapes, while the north wall shows a *paradeisos* scene with Ethiopian animals. The representations were meant as a vista: they are surrounded by painted architecture. Water was an important element in the decoration of the viridarium: apart from the fountain and *euripus*, the landscape scenes are surrounded by painted hydriae, fountains, etc. Meyboom noted that the decoration of the viridarium reflects three different parts of Egypt, as in the Nile mosaic from Palestrina: Nubia (a hunt with Ethiopian animals), Upper Egypt (a rocky landscape with pygmies), and the delta (a cultivated landscape with Greeks and temples). The persons reclining in the room could imagine themselves to be on the banks of the Nile: water splashed among the couches while the corresponding landscape was visible all around them. De Vos suggested a controversial interpretation of the viridarium as Osireion[144].

NSc (1913) 221, 250; *Spinazzola 1953*, 258, 275 ff.; *Schefold 1957*, 26; *Peters 1963*, 172-174; *Cèbe 1966*, 349; *Jashemski 1979*, 69 ff., 113; *Michel 1990*, 52-60, 83-87; *Pompei* I, 407-409; *LIMC* sv. pygmaioi 47a; *Cappel 1994*, sv. W7; *Meyboom 1995*, 62 and index sv.

034 Pompeii

a. Mosaic.
b. I 7, 1 (Casa di Paquius Proculus), triclinium.
c. The emblema decorates the floor of a large triclinium in the northeast part of the house. The picture is round (diameter: 0.43) and framed by a terracotta band and a square measuring 0.97 x 0.97. Originally these parts did not belong together. The frame can be dated later, in the period of the Third Style, as the remaining decoration of the house.
d. In situ.
e. Around 30 BC.

A boat with four dwarves sails the river. The boat is rendered in detail, with a cabin, a curved prow and a stern shaped like an animal head, decorated with a red ribbon. The two dwarves in the middle are naked; one of them is on the verge of falling overboard, but manages to grab the cabin. The other one reaches out to help him. In front of the boat bobs a papyrus canoe with two fishing pygmies. Around the canoe a crocodile, a hippopotamus, a duck and some fishes are swimming. In the background stands a temple on the river bank with a large palm next to it. A flight of steps leads from the sanctuary to the water.

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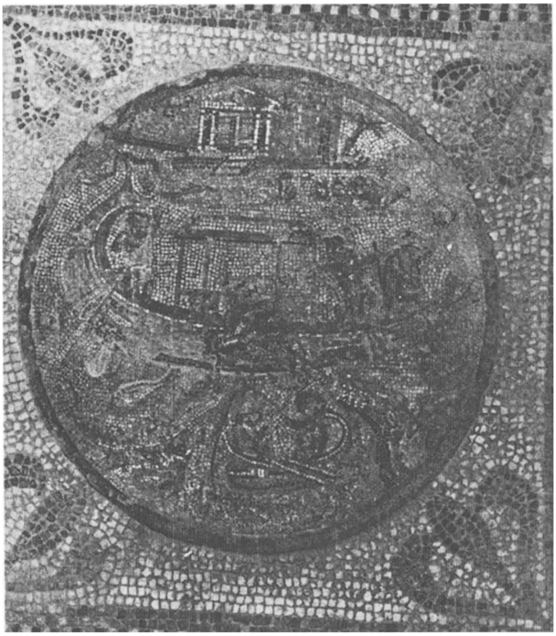
[144] De Vos in *Pompei* (sv. no.), based on the presence of scenes from the myths of Dionysos, Osiris and Itys elsewhere in the decoration of the house, combined with the fact that the viridarium was in fact surrounded by an *euripus* and thus, in her opinion, in a symbolic way was meant to represent the tomb of Osiris. The Casa dei Cei is published in *Spinazzola 1953*, 257-281 and in the monograph by Michel.



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For detailed information and a comprehensive description see *Ehrhardt 1998.*

The attribution of this house to Paquius Proculus is controversial. Recently Ehrhardt stated that the owners of the house cannot be traced with certainty but that the present attribution seems definitely wrong[145]. The house has an impressive atrium and a large peristyle on which lies the triclinium with the Nilotic emblema. In the cripto-porticus of the house an amphora was found with the text *Serapis dora*[146].

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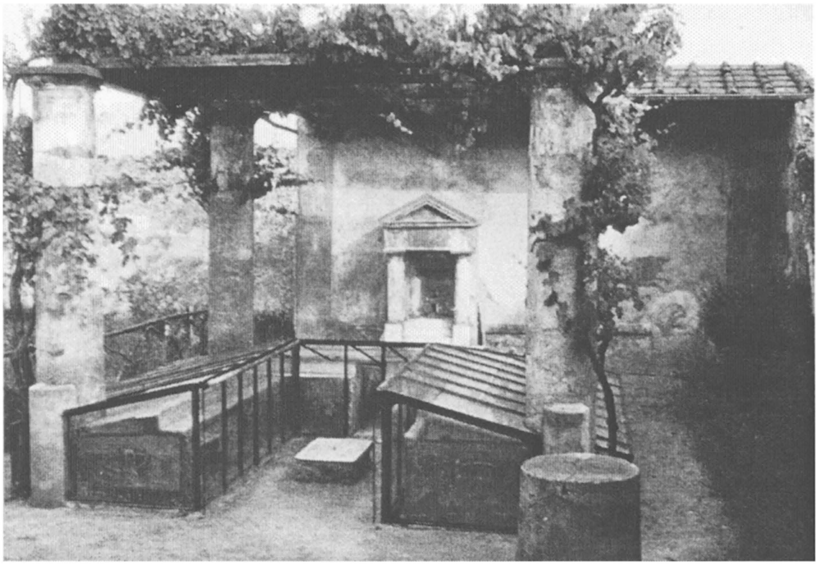
[145] *Ehrhardt 1998*, 159-162. In this discussion also a certain Cuspius Pansa plays a part; a person also mentioned in a graffito elsewhere in town, in which Pompeiian followers of the Isis cult declare themselves in favour of him as aedile, cf. *Malaise 1972a*, 264 sv. Pompei 3.

[146] Cf. A. Maiuri, *NSc* (1929) 386 ff.

A. Maiuri, *BdA* (1925) 268 ff.; *Pernice 1938*, 95; *Spinazzola 1953*, 297, 310 ff.; *Cèbe 1966*, 349; *Whitehouse 1985*, 129, 133; *Pompei* I, 483-484; *De Vos 1980*, 80-81; *LIMC* sv. pygmaioi 50; *Cappel 1994*, sv. M7; *Meyboom 1995*, 83, V n. 16bis, VII n. 15, 17, 21; *Ehrhardt 1998*, 81-86.

035 Pompeii

a. Painting.
b. I 7, 11 (Casa dell'Efebo/di P. Cornelius Tages), garden.
c. The painting extended over the front and inner sides of a stibadion. It has a total length of about 9 m, a height of about 0.5-0.6 m, and it is mainly executed in green and blue colours. It has been preserved relatively well, the colours however are sometimes very faint.
d. In situ.
e. Around 70 AD.



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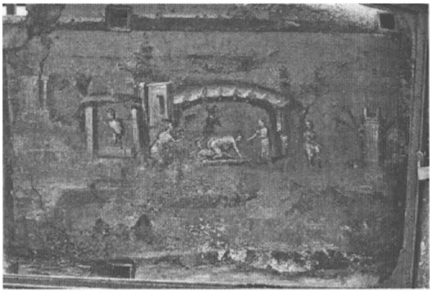
A (front, left): within a semicircular enclosure stands an aedicula with a statue of Isis-Fortuna. From behind the aedicula grow two palm trees, while a grove is depicted behind a part of the enclosure. In front of the aedicula two people are standing at an altar. On the left two people are walking near a high, small obelisk on a base. On the right a small aedicula is flanked by two small trees. Scattered over the picture some ibises are depicted.

B/C (east side, left): the inundated river is depicted with plots of land rising from the water. On the left a girl is sitting under a velum that hangs from a pillar. From behind the pillar grows a tree to which a dog has been attached. On the right a hippopotamus with an ibis on his back is standing in the water. In front of the animal sails a large papyrus canoe with pygmies. Then follows a high tower within a rectangular enclosure with two persons standing nearby. In the background two plots of land with huts, other buildings and pygmies can be distinguished.

(D/E) (east side, middle and right): the scene continues with a bridge leading to another plot of land. In the water under the bridge a large crocodile is swimming, while a pygmy is seen running over it. In front of the bridge between two small buildings stands a statue of the Apis bull on a base. Behind the buildings, in the background, a symposion is taking place. The scene continues with small buildings and a small aedicula with pygmies walking near it in the foreground. In the background a U-shaped porticus is visible with trees growing behind it.

F (south side, left): the first part of the south side shows an enclosure with a small aedicula. In the foreground on the right one can distinguish a two-storey building with a marble herm next to it and a pygmy in front. In the background another plot of land with aediculae is visible.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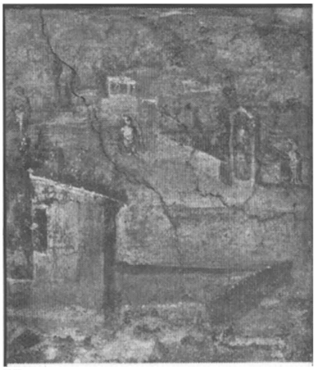
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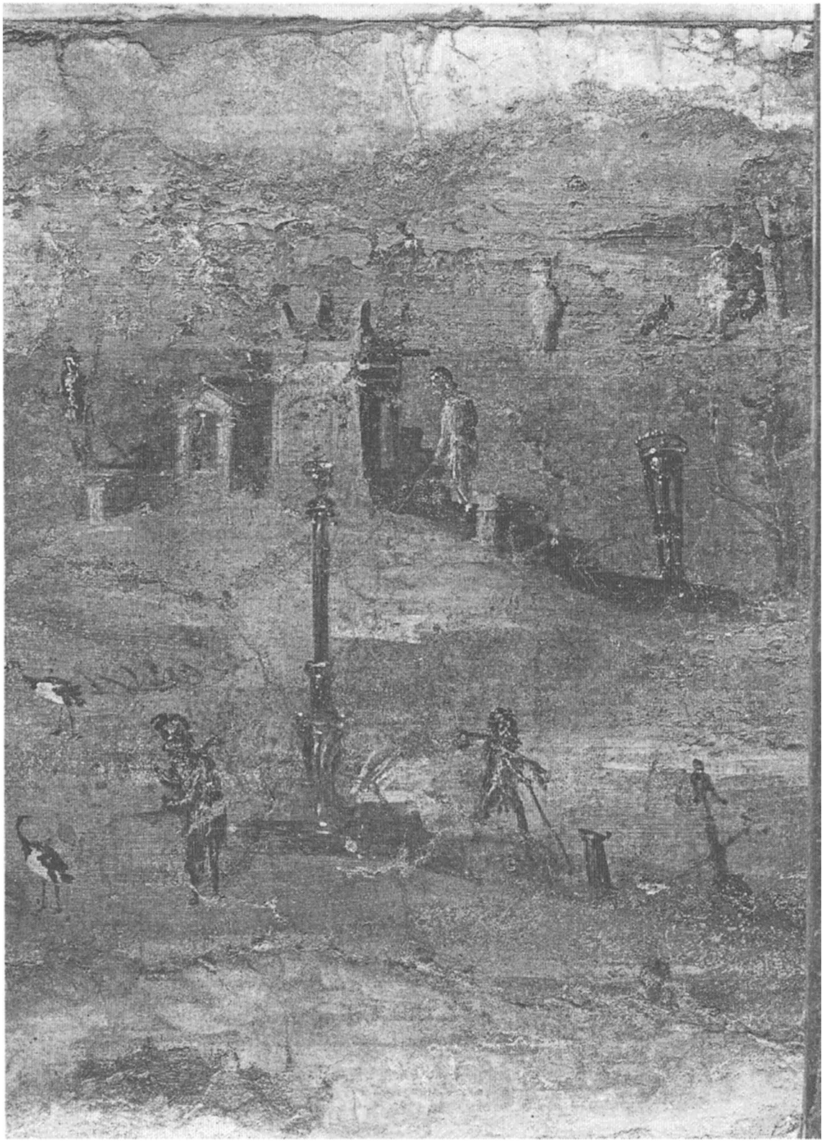
G (south side, right): after the *nilus*, the second part of the south side shows buildings next to the river with a female pygmy in front. This

part of the painting has been badly preserved. On the right a crocodile that is being attacked by a pygmy with spear and shield can be distinguished.
H/I (west side, left): the first part shows the U-shaped portico with trees growing behind that surrounds an aedicula. In the foreground some female pygmies, a few ibises and a lotus flower are visible. Further to the right another symposion is taking place under a pergola. Next to the pergola two palms are growing in a large amphora. The feasting dwarves are being attacked by a large crocodile.
J/K (west side, right): the picture continues with a landscape showing all kinds of buildings and people. One can see a horned altar, small aediculae and a pillar crowned by a vase as well as pygmies walking and offering.
L (front, right): a symplegma is taking place under a velum. A man is lying down on the ground while a woman bends over him. Next to them, two women are looking on, one of whom plays a double oboe. In the background a man with an amphora approaches. On the right, next to a tree and an aediculae with two palm trees, another man is looking on. On the left a dwarf uses a cochlea, a water-device. In the foreground the river with an embankment and some ducks is depicted.

For the division of the painting into twelve panels and a more detailed description see *Maiuri 1938* and the colourplates in *Pompei.*

P. Cornelius Tages is mentioned in the preserved archive of the banker L. Caecilius Iucundus; he was a libertus who after the earthquake of AD 62 apparently quickly earned a lot of money. His house was being renovated at the time of the eruption, a formerly separate house to the southeast was being added to the complex. This had occurred once earlier; the present-day shape of the house consists of a joining together of different habitations. It is debatable to what extent the complex, which had many entrances, functioned as an entity. Behind the stibadion with the painted Nilotic scene was a fountain that supplied water that, via a small canal, flowed between the couches. The scenes thus literally took place at the edge of the water and gave the symposiasts the impression that they were celebrating on the banks of the Nile. The wall behind the fountain was painted with a *paradeisos*, which would have enhanced the suggestion of exotic surroundings. In the house the name-giving statue of a bronze ephebe was found, as well as marble statues which could



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have decorated the garden. In the house that was being added to the mentioned complex, a hall (5.50 x 4.15) adjoining the atrium has been preserved. The decoration of the walls of the hall was clearly visible at the time of the excavation. This consisted of a black socle with plants with large water birds wading between them, a central area divided by vegetal ornaments and figures, and was concluded by a frieze with small landscapes depicting porticoes and ducks, with a stucco edge above it. The picture on the southern wall (0.74 x 0.65) shows a sacral-idyllic landscape with egyptianising features, as do the other pictures that have been less well preserved[147].

A. Maiuri, *NSc* (1927) 53-60, 84; A. Maiuri, *Le pitture delle casa di 'M. Fabius Amando' del 'Sacerdos Amendus' e di P.C. Teges (Reg. I,7)* (Monumenti della pittura antica, Pompei II) (1938), 23-27; *Schefold 1957*, 31; *Peters 1963*, 181-182; *Moormann 1988*, 148 sv. 155/3; *Pompei* I, 619-620; *LIMC* sv. pygmaioi 47b; *Jashemski 1993*, 39; *Cappel 1994*, sv. W8; *Meyboom 1995*, 62 and III n. 139.

036 Pompeii

a. Painting.
b. I 10, 4 (Casa del Menandro), atrium.
c. It concerns two fragments that have been preserved in the upper zone of the north wall. They are both located above a door, one on the east side and the other on the west side of the wall. The picture on the west side has been preserved only fragmentarily. Both pictures are surrounded by a painted frame.
d. In situ.
e. Between 50 and 62 AD.

A (east side): on the left two dwarves are standing in front of a building. In the middle of the picture walks a crocodile. Behind the animal a building with towers and porticoes can be distinguished. On the right a female pygmy makes an offering in front of a temple with a curved roof. Next to her, at the edge of the water, a pygmy is standing with a large bough over his shoulder. The entire foreground is covered by water.
B (west-side): still visible are a few kiosks in front of which one can see a female pygmy, with water in the foreground. It seems to concern the same kind of picture.

The house of Menander, a very large house covering an area of about 1800 m^2, was excavated in 1930/31. During the excavation a seal

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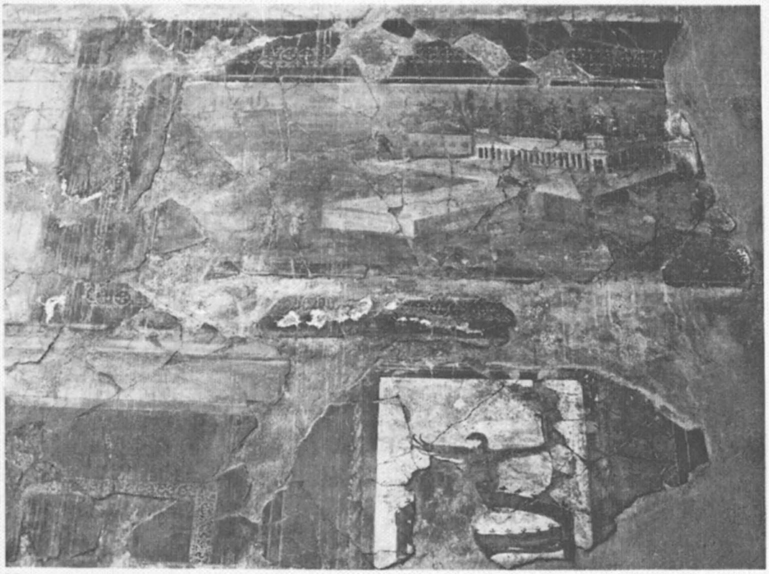
[147] For the house in general, cf. the excavation report by A. Maiuri, *NSc* (1927) 32-82, and a summary in *La Rocca/De Vos 1994*, 217-220; for the garden and the statues found, cf. *Jashemski 1993*, 40 with figs. 42-43; for the egyptianising decorations in the room to be adjoined to the house, cf. A. Maiuri, *NSc* (1929) 354-379, 360-362.



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of Quintus Poppaeus was found: a possible indication that in AD 79 the house belonged to the *gens Poppaea.* The earliest occupation probably dates back to the 4th to 3rd century BC. The present peristyle and the first phase of the bath complex date to 40-30 BC, as well as the floor of room 11, which was decorated with a Nilotic emblema (cat. no. 037). Around AD 50 another large renovation took place when the eastern part of the insula was added to the house. Also in that period a large part of the house was redecorated. The majority of the preserved decorations, amongst them the paintings with a Nilotic character in the atrium, dates from this period of the early Fourth Style. During the excavation of the house, several artefacts were found, amongst them an expensive silver dinner service[148].

The mosaics and paintings that have been preserved from 40-30 BC, thus belonging to a new construction and decoration phase, seem to be related thematically. The walls of the 'atriolo' of the private bath show caricatures of gods who are depicted as dwarves; the floor of the caldarium shows two swimming Blacks, while the entrance was decorated with an ityphallic Black; the paintings in the apse of the same caldarium show fluvial scenes with ducks, and lastly a triclinium was decorated with an emblema showing a symplegma between a satyr and a maenad[149]. Dwarves, Blacks, waterlandscapes and a symplegma are all elements of exotic, egyptianising scenes. The Nilotic scene with dwarves (cat. no. 037) was a very appropriate part of this decoration programme.

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[148] For (the chronology of) the house in general, cf. *Maiuri 1932*; R. Ling, The Insula of the Menander at Pompei: interim report, *The Antiquaries Journal* 63 (1983) 34 ff. and the recent British monograph: R. Ling, *The insula of the Menander at Pompeii*, I. *The structures* (1997). One of the silver bowls of the dinner service shows a decoration in relief with large water birds, snakes and smaller birds between corn and other vegetation while also lotus buds and pods seem to be depicted, see *Maiuri 1932* (II), tav. 45.

The painted Nilotic landscapes with dwarves occur in the upper zone of the north wall of the atrium. In a similar location on the west wall, three landscape paintings have been preserved, which much resemble the Egyptian landscapes, though typical Nilotic features are absent. The most northerly panel shows a complex on a quay with large water gardens in the foreground and a fisherman; only architecture has remained of the other two fragments. The east wall also shows in the upper zone two such panels with landscapes and architecture. It seems quite possible that all landscapes had a Nilotic character. Thus the atrium shows an (albeit discontinuous) Egyptian landscape frieze, as does the atrium of the Villa dei Misteri (cat. no. 067). Also the villa near Boscoreale (cat. no. 028) could be put forward as a parallel, where panels with landscapes occurred in the centre of three walls. Not all Boscoreale panels showed Nilotic features but from the combination it probably can be deduced that also the waterlandscapes without typical Egyptian features were intended as representing the country of the Nile. This also seems to have been the case in the atrium of the Casa del Menandro. This hypothesis is possibly supported by another Egyptian element in the atrium: ducks amongst waterplants on the lower part of the east wall, with above it a medallion with the head of Zeus-Amon or Sarapis.
Lastly, and according to Maiuri, there was a head of Sarapis placed on a pineapple in the peristyle[150].

Maiuri 1932, 31; *Schefold 1957*, 38 ff.; *Beyen* II,1, 120-198, 146 ff.;

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[149] See *Cappel 1994*, sv. W2 for the 'atriolo' decoration and *Clarke 1998*, 120 ff. for the mosaics of Blacks. More remains have been preserved from this period. The floor of the tepidarium was decorated by a mosaic emblema showing an aryballos among a number of strigiles. An exedra showed a socle with plants with above it vistas of a garden.

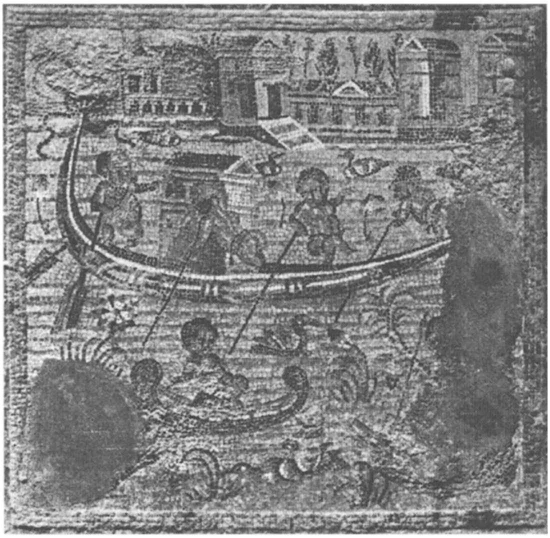
[150] Cf. *Maiuri 1932*, figs 7-9, pl. 3 (atrium) and fig. 82 (peristyle).

Pompei II, 240-241; *Clarke 1991*, 172; *LIMC* sv. pygmaioi 47c; *Cappel 1994*, sv. W9; *Meyboom 1995*, V n. 21.

037 Pompeii

a. Mosaic
b. I 10, 4 (Casa del Menandro), oecus.
c. The emblema (0.41 x 0.41) is placed in the centre of the floor of the so-called green oecus. Below, on the left and right sides the mosaic is damaged. The execution in opus vermiculatum is of high quality.
d. In situ.
e. Around 30 BC.

A boat with a cabin is sailing on a river. The boat has a high stern, decorated with a red ribbon. On board are four pygmies engaged in punting and steering. The helmsman is clearly depicted as stouter and older. In the foreground a dwarf is navigating a papyrus canoe. In the water, plants, rocks and ducks are depicted in detail. On the river bank one can distinguish buildings with towers from which steps lead to the water. Behind the building grow cypress trees.



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For a description of the context see cat. no. 036.

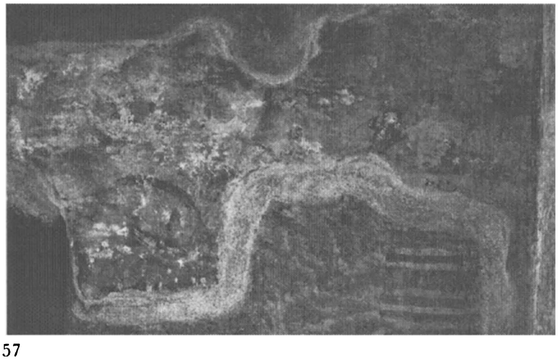
Maiuri 1932, 58-59; *Pernice 1938*, 59; *Spinazzola 1953*, 310; *Schefold*

1957, 38; *Cèbe 1966*, 352; *La Rocca/De Vos 1976*, 176; *Whitehouse 1985*, 129, 133; *Pompei* II, 240-241; *LIMC* sv. pygmaioi 50a; *Clarke 1991*, 188; *Cappel 1994*, sv. M3; *Meyboom 1995*, 83 and index sv.

038 Pompeii

a. Painting.
b. II 4, 2 (*praedia* di Iulia Felix), summer triclinium.
c. The large Nilotic landscape extended over three walls, only interrupted by the passage to the garden. Some fragments are still in situ; on two of these the painting is still visible. The largest (1.69 x 1.93 maximum) extends over the north and east walls. On the south wall a smaller fragment (0.35 x 0.60) can be distinguished. Whitehouse showed that also some fragments in the MN, Naples can be ascribed to the decoration of the triclinium, as well as some old drawings and descriptions of related fragments. These three elements together make it possible to get an impression of the decoration.
d. In situ; MN, Naples, 8608 and 8732; lost.
e. Around 70 AD.

A (In situ, north and east walls): a boat with three dwarves on board, one of whom seems to dance, sails the water in which many water-plants and a crocodile can be seen. In the upper half the river bank with a thatched hut and a walled garden is visible. On the right part of a dwarf with a spear and shield in his hand has been preserved, as well as a relatively large duck.



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B (In situ, south wall): the lower part of the body of a hippopotamus standing amid lotuses is visible.
C (fragments and drawings):

1. A crocodile between waterplants and a duck flying away (MN, Naples, 8732 = *Pitture d'Ercolano* V, pl. LXVI-C = *Helbig 1868*, 1566a).
2. A crocodile between waterplants and three swimming ducks (*Pitture d'Ercolano* V, pl. LXVI-A = *Helbig 1868*, 1566b).
3. A pygmy, with small branches in his hands, riding a crocodile together with a duck and two hippopotami among waterplants (*Pitture d'Ercolano* V, pl. LXVI-B = *Helbig 1868*, 1538).
4. A fish and hippopotamus among waterplants and lotuses (MN, Naples, 8608).

For a detailed description see *Whitehouse 1977*.

In *Pompei*, 267 sv. 141 also fragment MN, Napels, 8573 is attributed to the Nilotic decoration of the summer triclinium. On this fragment a pygmy is depicted with a sacrificial bowl in his hands, in front of a temple and some other buildings. A dwarf with fishes is approaching from the right. The river is visible in the foreground. As far as style is concerned, however, this fragment is so different from the other fragments, that such an attribution seems improbable.

With complex II 4, 2, the so-called *praedia* of Iulia Felix, we are dealing in AD 79 with a partly public, partly private complex with a bath building, bars and houses. It is assumed that the owners of the large complex, given the conditions after the earthquake of AD 62, changed to letting part of their comfortable house. The complex was excavated by Weber in 1755-57, subsequently covered over and re-excavated in the first half of the 20th century[151].

The triclinium with the Nilotic scene is furnished with marble stibadia. The rear wall (west) was, apart from the Nilotic painting, also decorated with a nymphaeum in the centre, with recesses on either side. The vault was decorated with yellow painted porous stucco. Water flowed from the nymphaeum between the stibadia and along the walls. Thus the users of the rooms could have imagined themselves in a cave on the banks of a river, surrounded by dwarves, ducks and crocodiles. The garden which could be viewed from the triclinium was moreover decorated with a large *euripus* in the centre. At the southern end of the garden is a decorated shrine dedicated to Isis, Sarapis and Anubis. In another room a gold amulet was found with an image of Sarapis. In a biclinium remains have been preserved in the upper zone of a painting of ducks among waterplants which have been referred to as 'paesaggio nilotico'[152].

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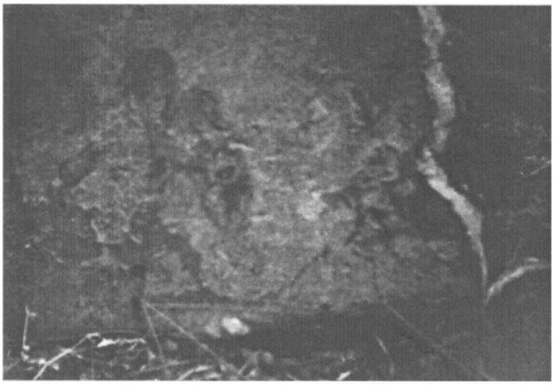
[151] For the person of Weber and a publication of his excavation reports, cf. C.C. Parslow, *Rediscovering Antiquity. Karl Weber and the excavations of Herculaneum, Pompeii and Stabiae* (1995) esp. 107-115 (Pompeii and the praedia Iuliae Felicis) and appendix 1. Initially, Weber called the dwarves in the Nilotic frieze cupids.

Pitture d'Hercolano V, 295, pl. LXVI; *Helbig 1868*, sv. 1538, 1566; F. Rakob, Ein Grottentriklinium in Pompeji, *RM* 71 (1964) 182 ff.; *Tran Tam Tinh 1964*, 125-126 sv. 6-9; *Whitehouse 1977*; *Pompei* III, 184-186; *LIMC* sv. pygmaioi 45; *Jashemski 1993*, 86 sv. No. 143; *Cappel 1994*, sv. W10.

039 Pompeii

a. Painting.
b. II 9, 2, garden.
c. The painting, in blue and brown colours, extends over the front and inner sides of a stibadion and has a height of about 0.6. It has only been fragmentarily preserved and the paint on these fragments has faded badly.



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[152] For the triclinium in general, cf. extensively the sv. no. mentioned publication by Rakob. At the shrine a bronze tripod was found, decorated with ityphallic satyrs and a small silver statue of Harpocrates. Both are now in the MN, Naples. For these finds in general, cf. *Tran Tam Tinh 1964*, 125-126 sv. 6-8 and 169 sv. 125.

d. In situ.
e. Around 70 AD.

A boat with its prow shaped like an animal head is still visible, as well as other boats with pygmies, and a pygmy with a large shield who is defending himself against an ibis. At the time of the excavation, also erotic scenes showing pygmies amid the rushes could be distinguished.

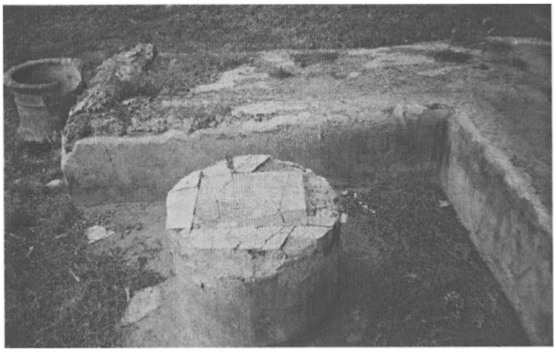
This modest stibadion is located in the northeastern corner of the garden of the house. The square table between the couches has also been preserved. The paintings are strongly related to the stibadion paintings with the same subject in the adjacent house (II 9, 4) and seem to have been painted by the same hand(s).

A.M. Sodo, Regio II, insula 9, *RivStPomp* II (1988) 195-202, 200; *Cappel 1994*, sv. W11; *Jacobelli 1995*, 88 n. 28.

040 Pompeii

a. Painting.
b. II 9, 4, garden.
c. The painting extends over the front and inner sides of a stibadion (3.7 x 4.8 x 0.6). Only fragments remain on which hardly anything can be distinguished. The painting is only referred to in a general manner twice.
d. In situ.
e. Around 70 AD.

It concerns a waterlandscape with pygmies amid marshes.



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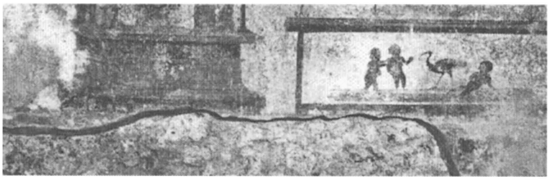
In the rear part of the garden a stibadion with a round table has been preserved, of which the front and inner sides were decorated with a painted Nilotic scene. The round table in the centre had a marble top and was also decorated in red/brown-green/blue colours. The floor between the table and the stibadion is decorated with pieces of marble.

A.M. Sodo, Regio II, insula 9, *RivStPomp* II (1988) 195-202, 201; *Jacobelli 1995*, 88 n. 28.

041 Pompeii

a. Painting.
b. V 2, i (Casa delle Nozze d'Argento), room q (probably a cubiculum) and peristyle.
c. Room q is located next to the tablinum of the house and can be reached via the atrium. On the predella three (originally four) little tableaux with dwarves are depicted. Also in the peristyle porticus paintings with an egyptianising character have been preserved. It concerns three (originally four) simple marsh scenes in the upper zone of the walls.
d. In situ.
e. 62-79 AD.

A (room q): two scenes are located on the east wall: on the north side the tableau shows two dwarves feeding two ibises; the southern painting is now lost, but showed two dwarves as soldiers. The other two scenes are located on the west wall. On the north side one can see two dwarves feeding an ibis; a third dwarves sits on the ground and looks on. The southern painting shows two dwarves as soldiers standing next to a sitting person with a staff. In all paintings the landscape is indicated by small leaves of grass.



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B (peristyle): the panels are located on the east and west walls and show ducks amidst lotuses. The panel on the east wall, south side is lost. The panel on the west wall, north side is best preserved.

Archer has proposed to date the paintings in room q and the peristyle after the earthquake of AD 62, on the grounds of the stylistic differences with the other Fourth Style decoration which has a terminus ante quem of AD 60 by the find of a graffito with consul names.

The so-called Casa delle Nozze d'Argento belonged in AD 79 to L. Albucius Celsus, a member of an old prosperous family who put himself forward for the function of aedile. A table was found in the house on which there were a number of small terracotta egyptianising statues: two crocodiles, a frog and a toad.

A. Mau, *BdI* (1893) 39; *Schefold 1957*, 78; *Whitehouse 1977*, 64 sv. n. 49; *Pompei* III, 676-677; *Cappel 1994*, sv. W12; C.W. Archer, The fourth style and the Casa delle Nozze d'Argento at Pompei, *JRA* 7 (1994) 129-150, specifically 137 n. 9.

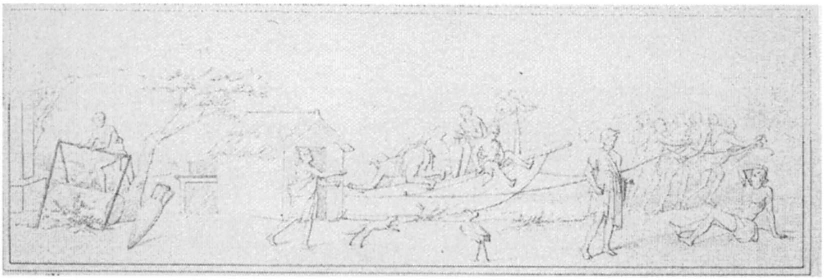
042 Pompeii

a. Painting.
b. VI 2, 4 (Casa di Sallustio), garden and peristyle.
c. In the garden of the house two panels with marsh scenes were visible in the upper zone of the wall. At the time of the excavation the paintings were still preserved in good condition, but nowadays they are totally gone and only known from two engravings. The remarkable frieze-form painting in the peristyle is only known from a drawing by Discanno.
d. Lost.
e. Around 70 AD.

A (garden): simple marsh scenes with ducks amidst lotuses.

B (peristyle): Nilotic landscape with realistically pictured people. A boat full of men is pulled ashore by another group of men. One of the men on the boat leans forward in an erotic gesture; another one is busy with two amphorae. On the river bank two people are walking along, a third has fallen to the ground. A dog and an ibis can also be distinguished. On the left one can see a hut, a tree and a large amphora, with next to it a man using a cochlea.

The house has been arbitrarily named after a certain C. Sallustius, whose name was praised on the outside wall of the house. A seal found in the house in the 19th century mentions the name of A. Cossius Libanus, a person who seems to qualify more as the owner.



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The name of Libanus, which points to an oriental origin, frequently occurred in the entire Mediterranean area, particularly in Egypt. The possibility of the occupier of Casa di Sallustio having an Egyptian origin should therefore not be excluded. A cubiculum in the house was decorated in the Augustan period with paintings, which show (ornamental) Egyptian details, such as a sphinx and a sistrum[153]. The front of the complex was occupied by bars and shops and it has been alleged that the so-called Casa di Sallustio was a hospitium[154].

C. Mazois, *Les ruïnes de Pompei dessinées et mesurées pendant les années 1809-1811* (1824-1838) II, 78, tav. 38-39; G. Fiorelli, *Descrizione di Pompei* (1875) 85; *Jashemski 1979*, fig. 250, 251; *De Vos 1980*, 72-74 sv. addendum ai nn. 20-22; *Pompei* IV, 87-88; *Domus-Viridaria-Horti Picti*, fig. 39; *Cappel 1994*, sv. W13 *Disegnatori*, 839-840 sv. Discanno no. 1 (B).

043 Pompeii

a. Painting.
b. VI 2, 14 (Casa delle Amazzoni), viridarium.
c. In the centre of one of the walls of the inner garden an aedicula was placed; the inside of this niche was decorated with a paint-

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[153] *La Rocca/De Vos* 1994, 340-341.

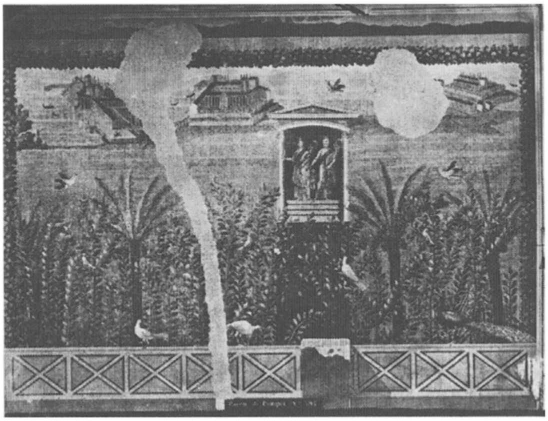
[154] *Jashemski 1979*, 168-170 originally argued in favour of an interpretation of the complex as a hotel, followed by *La Rocca/De Vos 1994*, 340-341 and *Pompei* 87 (at least for the last occupation period). *Jashemski 1993*, 121, however, again talks about a house. Also *Wallace-Hadrill 1994*, 51 doubts the identification as a hospitium, as the architecture shows little resemblance with other complexes which can be identified with certainty as hotels.

ing showing Isis, Sarapis and Harpocrates in an Egyptian landscape. The representation has only been preserved through an engraving by Morelli dating from 1812, one year after the excavation.

d. Lost.

e. Around 70 AD.

In the niche the three deities are depicted standing on a platform. Isis holds a sistrum in her right hand and a cornucopiae on her left arm. Sarapis wears a situla and a cornucopiae; Harpocrates stands between them. All three are wearing a lotus flower, symbol of the inundation, on the breast. In the foreground a hedge, trees and palms are depicted behind a small fence. In the vegetation different kinds of birds and a peacock can be distinguished. A river flows behind the vegetation. In the background of the painting, a few large complexes with porticoes stand on the river bank.



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PAH I, iii, 52, 239; *Helbig 1868*, 80; *Schefold 1957*, 94; *Tran Tam Tinh 1964*, 127-128; *Zanker 1979*, 507; *Pompei 1748-1980*, 36, 135; *Grimal 1984*, 289, 450; Th. Fröhlich, *Lararien und Fassadenbilder in den Vesuvstädten. Untersuchungen zur 'volkstümlichen' pompejanischen Malerei* (1991) 275 sv. L 58; *Jashemski 1993*, 340 sv. 42; *Meyboom 1995*, IV n. 154; *Pompei* IV, 169.

044 Pompeii

a. Painting
b. VI 5, unknown.
c. Four fragments that undoubtedly formed part of a Nilotic landscape, showing a sexual scene as part of the depiction of the festivities and rituals during the inundation of the Nile. The two largest fragments form the central part of the scene and measure 0.30 x 0.18 (maximum).
d. ?
e. Around 70 AD.

Four persons can be distinguished. In the centre of the picture a woman sits on her knees. In front of her one can see another woman in a tunica playing a double oboe, while behind her a third woman raises her hands enthusiastically. From the right a dark coloured man comes dancing along. He is almost naked and is holding a carrying stick over his shoulders.

The little-known fragments of insula 5 of regio VI are closely related to the painting with a similar subject which can be found on the front of the triclinium in the garden of I 7, 11 (Casa dell'Efebo/ di P.C. Tages, cat. no. 035). The composition is identical: a woman, probably bending over a man lying on the ground, accompanied by two other women, one of whom is playing a double oboe, and an Egyptian who approaches from the right.

M. Bonghi Jovini (ed.), *Ricerche a Pompei. L'insula 5 della Regio VI dalle orgine al 79 d.C. I. Campagne di scavo 1976-1979* (1984) 325-326 sv. pittura parietale no. 26.

045 Pompeii

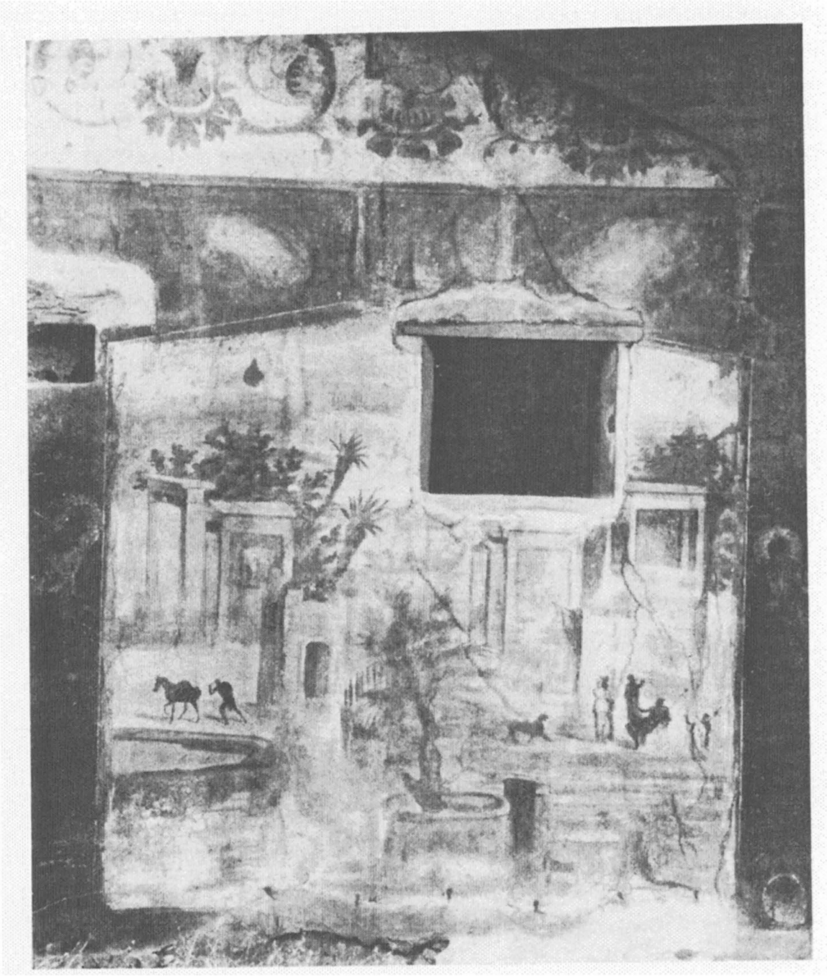
a. Painting.
b. VI 7, 23 (Casa di Apollo), garden.
c. The large painting with Nilotic character (2.4 x 2.1) is placed on the outside of a cubiculum in the garden and is framed by a painted red ribbon. In the upper zone a part of the picture has been lost by the installation of a window. Nowadays the colours are badly faded. A 19th century watercolour in the collections of the DAI in Rome gives a detailed representation of the original state and colours, as does the photograph published by

Spinazzola. The south wall of the inner garden showed a Nilotic landscape with dwarves in the upper zone of the wall. Already in the 19th century this painting had faded so badly that it had nearly disappeared.

d. In situ, however almost lost (A); lost (B).
e. Around 70 AD.

A (outside of the cubiculum): a large tree growing from a well is placed in the centre of the foreground. Against the well one can distinguish the rear of an aedicula. Further to the right one can see a goat and a round altar near a tree stump. A large area of water is depicted behind this piece of land. On the bank across six persons are depicted that can all be placed in the circle of Bacchus. From the right a satyr (?) with wreath and tyrsos and a bacchante are approaching. On a flight of stairs lies Bacchus himself, a wreath on his head and a tyrsos and rhyton in his hand. He is facing a woman who plays the double oboe and two other women, one of whom is holding a tambourine. From the left a panther approaches. Behind this group an enclosed area is depicted with kiosk-like structures and a lot of vegetation and trees inside the walls. Near one of these buildings one can see four persons (priests?) beneath a kind of loggia. On the left a man rides his heavily packed donkey at the edge of the water. Behind him again kiosk-like structures and heavy vegetation with two palms are depicted. Behind this vegetation, in the background, one can distinguish a boat with people on board. Further in the background again architecture, perhaps towers with a footbridge, is visible.
B (south wall of the garden): an Egyptian landscape with, amongst other subjects that have faded, a crocodile hunted by dwarves.

During the excavations from 1811 to 1840, a seal was found in the so-called Casa di Apollo bearing the name of A. Here(n)nuleius Communis, a person who can be connected with commercial activities. However, there is uncertainty about the attribution of the house to this person. From the irregular plan of the complex it appears that the house originated in the decades before AD 79 from formerly separate units. Via the atrium and the tablinum one reaches first a small courtyard, which is almost totally occupied by a large marble fountain. Marble vases with reliefs and herms were placed around it. An idyllic environment was suggested by a large painted garden scene. The real garden, with two different Nilotic paintings,



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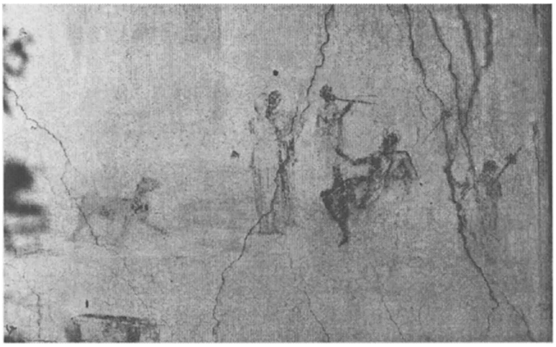
was north of this courtyard and lower lying. This garden was surrounded on three sides (east, south and west) by a terrace-shaped elevation of approximately 1.20 m high, on which probably a pergola was standing. One of the walls, forming the rear wall of this terrace, was decorated in the upper zone with a Nilotic scene with dwarves. These walls were furthermore decorated with painted garden scenes. The north side was occupied by three linked constructions. To the west was a small cubiculum, one of the outside walls of which was decorated with the extensive Nilotic landscape. The other exterior wall was decorated with a mosaic depicting

Achilles between Lycomedes' daughters. The interior wall of this cubiculum is decorated with a high-quality scaenae-frons. The second construction, in the centre, consists of a covering that was supported by slender pillars which were decorated with shells and mosaic pieces. In the rear wall, which was decorated with marble up to the socle, there were niches in which statues would have been placed. Marble furniture and herms also belonged to the furnishings of this open nymphaeum. Adjoining was the third structure: an elevated room under a pergola on the eastern side. In the centre of the garden there was a round marble well. During the excavations two portraits of philosophers were also found, which would have been displayed in the garden. The garden constitutes a typical example of the imitation of villae which often occurred in Pompeian town gardens. The *otium* notion is expressed here in an intellecual manner[155].



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Helbig 1868, 567 (A); 1546b (B); *Rostovtzeff 1911*, 78; *Spinazzola 1953*, fig. 311; *Schefold 1957*, 102; *Peters 1963*, 177; *Zanker 1979*, 481-484; *Pompei* IV, 470-471; *Italienische Reise*, 150-151 sv. 18; *LIMC* sv. pygmaioi 47d; *Jashemski 1993*, 130 sv. 246; *Meyboom 1995*, 62, III n. 155, IV n. 120.

046 Pompeii

a. Painting.
b. VI 9, 6/7 (Casa dei Dioscuri), tablinum 42.
c. Of the painting above the east panel on the south wall only a watercolour (DAIR Archiv 83,92) has been preserved.

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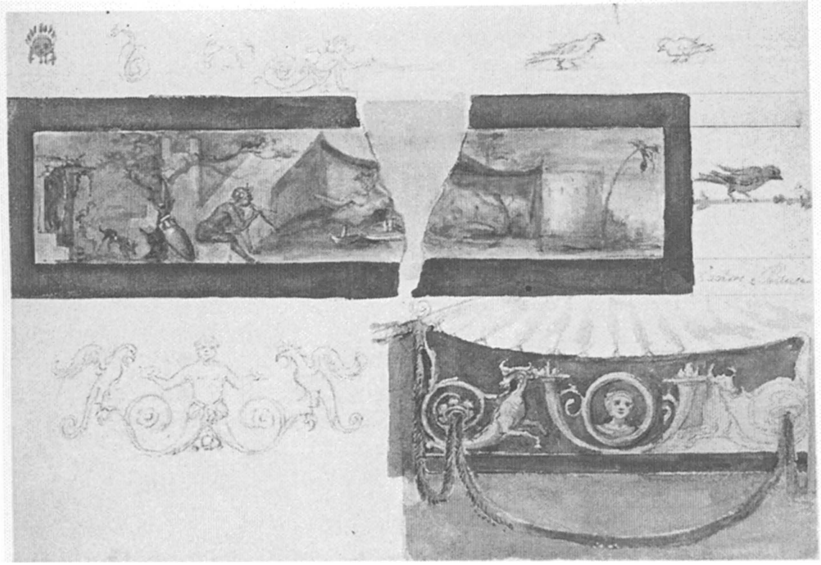
[155] Cf. *Zanker 1979* (in particular 481-484) with previous literature.

d. Lost.
e. Around 70 AD.

In the centre is a velum under which two young men repose while drinking and playing the double oboe. On the right a round tower-house and a palm tree are depicted; on the left one can see an amphora standing against a tree while a dog and an ibis are walking in front of the entrance to a building.



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The Casa dei Dioscuri was redecorated in the period of the late Fourth Style, probably by the same workshop that was also responsible for the paintings in the Casa dei Vettii. The house then covered one third of the entire insula and was thus one of the largest houses of Pompeii. Vignettes in cubiculum 35 show landscapes which possibly suggest an Egyptian character.

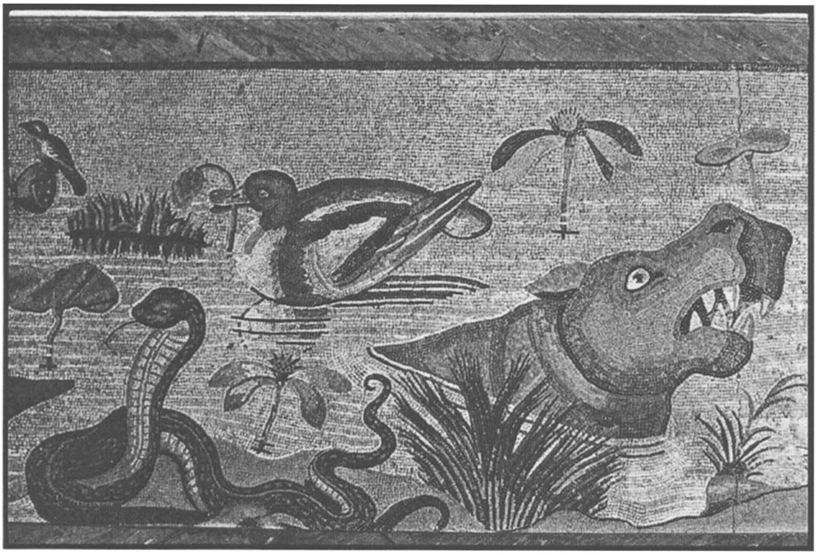
Helbig 1868 sv. 1560; *Italienische Reise*, 178-179 sv. 38.

047 Pompeii

a. Mosaic.
b. VI 12, 2 (Casa del Fauno), summer triclinium.
c. The mosaic has the form of a frieze and consists of a large central part (0.64 x 3.3) with two smaller pieces on either side (0.64 x 1.32). It was framed by a band of red tesserae.

d. MN, Naples, 10323.
e. 90-80 BC.

In the foreground the bank of the river is depicted with grass, some other vegetation and Egyptian animals behaving hostilely towards each other. One can distinguish a cobra and an ichneumon, two ibises and a crocodile. The water is full of animals, plants and flowers. A hippopotamus is depicted, as well as numerous ducks and birds. Two ducks are trying to grab a frog, while most of the birds are eating the fruits of flowers.



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With a surface of almost 3000 m^2, the Casa del Fauno was the largest house ever in Pompeii, and, as far as anything can be said on the basis of the preserved remains, also one of the most richly decorated ones. It is possible that it belonged to the Campano gens of the *Satrii*[156]. The Nilotic scene decorated the entrance from the peristyle to a summer triclinium, the floor of which was decorated with the Alexander mosaic. The Nilotic mosaic was not made for this location and therefore probably came from somewhere else. This is evidenced by the splitting up of the scene into three parts, the adjustments to the thus created parts and the cutting into the bases of the pillars[157]. Noteworthy is the realistic representation of the Nilotic flora and fauna. Thus, for instance, the various flowering stages of the lotus flower have been depicted correctly and in detail. A few more mosaics were preserved in the house, which all have a Hellenistic subject: "Con la fusione di elementi architettonici italici e greci (–) e sopratutto con i suoi programmi decorativi, la Casa del Fauno offriva un esempio illustre e, sicuramente nella prima fase, pionieristico, delle forme di vita ellenizzante di una classe borghese ormai molto ricca"[158].

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[156] As suggested by *Meyboom 1995*, 167-172 (Appendix 17: the owners of the Casa del Fauno at Pompei).

A. Nicolini, *Quadro in musaico scoperto in Pompei a di 24 ottobre 1831* (1832) pl. IX; *Pernice 1938*, 176-177; *Meyboom 1977*, 72; *Lancha 1980*, 249; *Pollitt 1986*, 223-226; L. Balensiefen, *Die Bedeutung des Spiegelbildes als ikonographisches Motiv in der Antiken Kunst* (1990) 79-81 sv. K 54, 84; *Pompei* V, 80-85; M. Donderer, Das pompejanische Alexandermosaik, ein östliches Importstück?, in: *Rom und der Osten*, 19-31 (with further previous literature); *Meyboom 1995*, 17-18, 81, 92 and appendix 17.

048 Pompeii

a. Mosaic.
b. VI 17, 42 (Casa del Bracciale d'oro), triclinium 31.
c. From this house in the Insula Occidentalis a nymphaeum with glass-paste mosaic has been preserved. Beneath the central aperture with steps a small panel showing a simple Nilotic scene is executed in coloured tesserae on a white ground.
d. Antiquarium Pompeii.
e. 35-45 AD.

The picture shows ducks amidst lotus flowes on the water.

The same room (triclinium 31) is decorated with an egyptianising garden painting while also room 24 shows a landscape with egyptianising features[159].

It is remarkable that the closest parallel to a nymphaeum like the

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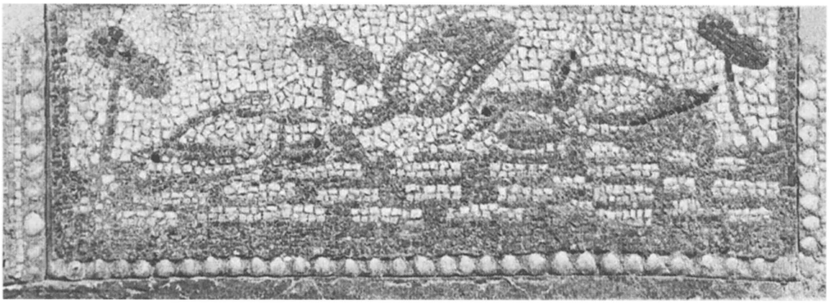
[157] Cf. for more details the sv. no. mentioned publication by Pernice.

[158] *Pompei* V, 83 (A. Hoffmann). His monograph on the Casa del Fauno, which will appear in the series *Häuser in Pompeji*, is eagerly awaited. Cf., most recently, *Pompei* V, 83-85 (M. de Vos) and F. Zevi, Die Casa del Fauno in Pompeji und das Alexandermosaik, *RM* 105 (1998) 21-65.

[159] For the famous garden painting see *Rediscovering Pompeii*, 226-236 sv. 163.



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example from the Casa del Bracciale d'oro, the nymphaeum that has been preserved under the palazzo Pallavicini-Rospigliosi in Rome, might have been decorated with a Nilotic scene as well (see cat. no. 014).

Rediscovering Pompeii, 270-280 sv. 194; *Pompei* VI, 44-45.

049 Pompeii

a. Painting.
b. VII 1, 8 (Terme Stabiane), rooms F and G (next to the piscina), basins.
c. Rooms F and G have been badly preserved; their decorations can only be reconstructed with the aid of the descriptions of the excavator Minervini. Originally the south and north walls were decorated with large Nilotic landscapes, while both west walls showed smaller Nilotic scenes.
d. Lost.
e. Around 70 AD.

A (room F, south wall): in the river a crocodile and a duck are swimming among waterplants. On the river bank two men are standing next to a building. One of them, dressed in a kind of chlamys, is holding a club and turns towards a crocodile. A group of girls can also be distinguished on the river bank. One of them picks something from a plant. Furthermore a naked dwarf and, isolated on the right side of the picture, a goat can be seen.
B (room F, west wall): a dwarf with a club in his hands stands next to a building. Also two small birds can be distinguished. Further to the right stands a crowned person with his hands in the air.
C (room G, north wall): next to a building on a podium one can see two persons. One is leaning on a club, the other is depicted with a beard, a wreath on his head, a large phallus, and a club and bough

in his hand. Behind them is a naked woman. Next to another building, in the upper zone of the picture, is a cave in which "un osceno concubito" between a bearded man and a woman is taking place. Two men are standing next to the cave, a third plays a double oboe. Another part of the picture shows men and women at a bridge, hunting crocodiles. Next to the bridge stands an aedicula. A man and a woman make an offering to the wreathed cult statue of a goddess in the aedicula.
D (room G, west wall): two women can be seen, as well as two small waterbirds.

The complex of the Stabian baths, the oldest thermae building in Pompeii, is published in detail in Eschebach's monograph of 1979. The Nilotic scenes on the longer north and south walls were painted in a frame in the central part of the wall, above a high marble socle. The short west walls of both rooms showed a recess decorated with a mosaic of glass tesserae, depicting ducks among waterplants. This fitted in very well with the Nilotic landscapes of more modest design that had been applied below the recesses. Apart from the Egyptian landscapes, the walls of these rooms were decorated with painted garden scenes, in which statues of nymphs, satyrs and egyptianising androsphinxes were depicted. The suggestion of a landscape environment in which water played a large part seems to have been the focus. This fitted in with the function of the rooms which served as basins, probably to rinse the worst dust off feet and body before dipping into the swimming pool[160].

G. Minervini, *BullArchNap* 4 (N.S.) (1855) 161 and 5 (1856) 34 ff.; *Helbig 1868*, 1545; *Schefold 1957*, 162; *De Vos 1979*, 86-88; *Moormann 1988*, 190 sv. 231/2; *Pompei* VI, 149-150; *LIMC* sv. pygmaioi 47e; *Cappel 1994*, sv. W14.

050 Pompeii

a. Painting.
b. VII 2, 25 (Casa delle Quadrighe), peristyle and viridarium.
c. In total three egyptianising landscapes can be reconstructed. Two paintings depicting a symplegma on a boat (0.24 x 1.24) were originally placed on the pluteus of the peristyle and are now in the MN, Naples. A third Nilotic landscape is still in situ in the viridarium on the socle of the wall. The colours, however, are

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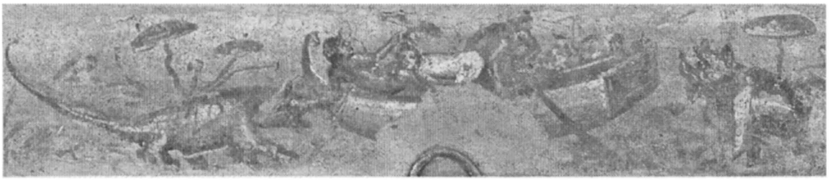
[160] Cf. *Eschebach 1979*, 61.

badly faded and the picture is hardly visible any longer. Its egyptianising character can however be established by a drawing of the viridarium wall by Abbate (ADS 542).

d. MN, Naples, 27698 and 27702; in situ.

e. Around 70 AD.

A (peristyle, MN, Naples, 27698): the river is depicted with large lotus flowers in and on the water. On the left and right, one can see a crocodile and another animal, probably a hippopotamus. In the centre of the picture a boat is sailing on which a symplegma with three persons is taking place. A man lies on the forecastle and raises his right hand in a gesticulating manner. In front of him sits a woman on her knees. She is bending towards him, while she is sexually approached by a second man behind her.



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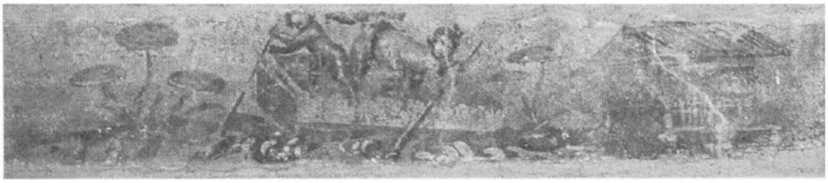
B (peristyle, MN, Naples, 27702): a similar scene is depicted: a woman, holding a rudder in her hand, is siting on a raft and is sexually approached by a man behind her. Also a man with a punting pole is depicted. On the left one can see a thatched hut on the river bank; on the right a large lotus plant is growing in the water.



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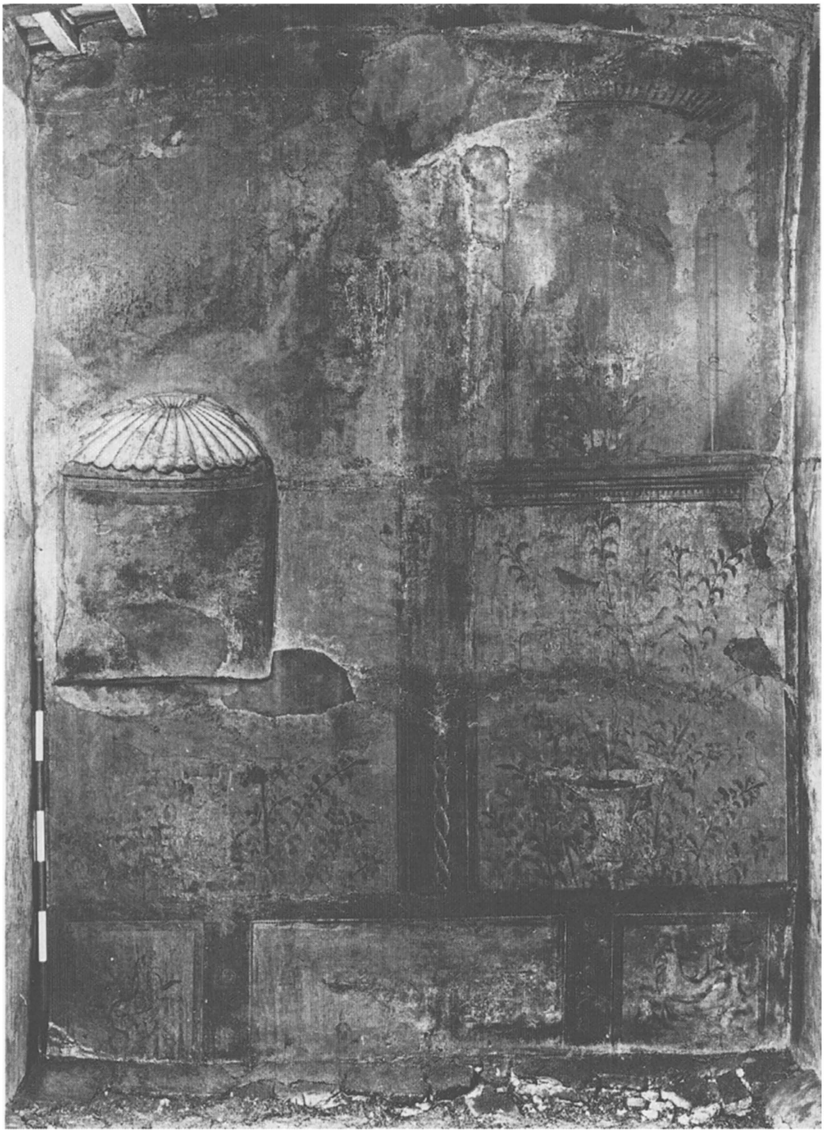
C (viridarium, in situ): a pygmy flees from a crocodile towards a boat with two pygmies on the water. In the background one can see a round tower. Houses, a woman and some ibises can be distinguished in the foreground.

The so-called Casa delle Quadrighe is a modest house. The wall of the viridarium, with a Nilotic scene in the central part of the socle, was also decorated with painted garden scenes.

A. Avellino, *BullArchNap* 3 (1844) 9; idem, *BullArchNap* 5 (1846) 2;



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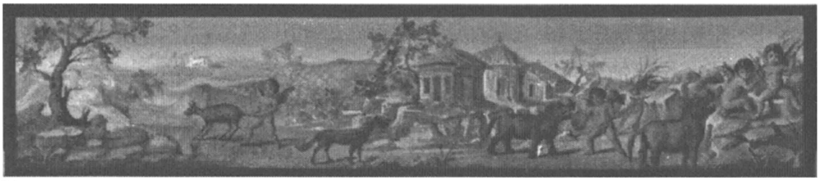
Helbig 1868, 1540; *Schefold 1957*, 173; *Cèbe 1966*, pl. 13, 1-2; G.L. Marini, *Il gabinetto segreto del Museo Nazionale di Napoli* (1971), 8-9; *LIMC* sv. pygmaioi 47f; *Pompei* VI, 683-684; *Cappel 1994*, sv. W15; *Disegnatori*, 313-314 sv. Abbate no. 115.8 (C).

051 Pompeii

a. Painting.
b. VII 4, 48 (Casa della Caccia antica), tablinum and viridarium.
c. The predellae of two walls in the tablinum each show a tableau with pygmy scenes. The colours have faded and the details are hardly recognizable; a 19th century watercolour however shows the paintings in their original state. Also the upper zone of the west wall of the viridarium was, over its entire length, decorated with a Nilotic landscape with pygmies. Only the extreme left side of it has been preserved.
d. In situ.
e. 71-79 AD.

A (tablinum, east wall): the central predella shows pygmies fighting Nilotic animals. The background is formed by a rocky landscape with buildings, trees and plants. On the left an animal tries to hide itself behind a tall tree. Next to it one can see a crocodile trying to outwit a donkey that is held by the tail by a pygmy who is trying to protect the animal. In the centre stands a dog in front of some buildings. On the right two dwarves are depicted, as well as a hippopotamus attacking two other pygmies.



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B (tablinum, west wall): the central predella has only been partly preserved. This fragment shows a group of pygmies fighting each other. In the middle one can see a dwarf with a club in his raised left hand and a shield in his right hand, who is turning toward an enemy. On the right, a dwarf with a pointed cap comes riding along on a hippopotamus; behind him another dwarf comes running to the battlefield. In the background vegetation and buildings were depicted.

C (viridarium): the fragment shows three pygmies rowing a canoe that is attacked by a crocodile. The river and some vegetation are clearly visible.

Other paintings of the tablinum of the Casa della Caccia Antica show, instead of pymies, putti fighting wild animals.

Apart from an extended Nilotic scene in the upper zone, the west wall of the viridarium was decorated with two painted vistas which showed landscapes. Nowadays these paintings are barely distinguishable but they have been handed down by two drawings by Abbate, which were made in the year of the excavation of the house, and by some old photographs (published in *Pompei*, (sv. no.) sv. 46 and 47). The paintings show islands with sanctuaries surrounded by water, and remind of the almost equally large paintings with a similar theme in the ecclesiasterion of the Isis temple in Pompeii. In the two landscapes one can see on the one hand Polyphemus and Galathea and on the other Apollo. In Abbate's drawing it seems that one can distinguish a sarcophagus at the water's edge, which would obviously point to the Egyptian inspiration of these landscapes, but in the old photographs this detail is not visible (anymore). Both sources do however show an Egyptian towerhouse in the southern painting, with behind it vegetation and an Egyptian burial chapel. Alltogether, this painting of Apollo in an egyptianising landscape strongly recalls the scene in the garden of the house of Apollo (cat. no. 045). The south wall of the room shows a *paradeisos*. The viridarium thus would have had a strongly egyptianising character, especially when the statue of a crocodile found in the house would have been mounted there.

The paintings in the Casa della Caccia Antica can be dated precisely by the find of an impression of a coin in fresh plaster. The sestertius was coined in AD 71 and thereby provides a terminus post quem[161].

Woermann 1876, 381; *Schefold 1957*, 180; *Peters 1963*, 177; *Whitehouse 1977*, 64 n. 49; *De Vos 1980*, 86; P.M. Allison, *The wall-paintings of*

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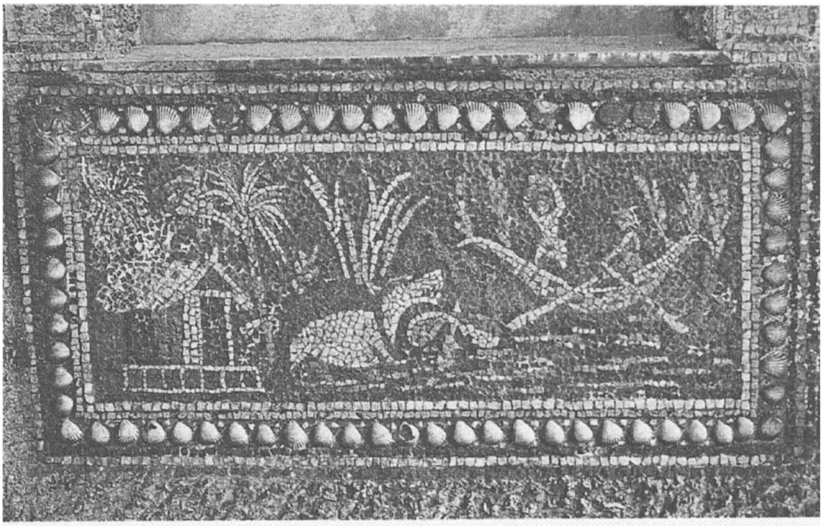
[161] The drawings by Abbate (ADS 590) have been published in *Disegnatori*, 241-242 sv. Abbate nos. 4 and 5. Cf. also J.P. Descoeudres, The Australian Expedition to Pompeii: Contributions to the chronology of the Fourth Pompeian Style, in: *Pictores per provincias* (1987) 135-139, and *Allison 1992* with all relevant literature on this house, which will be published by Allison and Sear in the series *Häuser in Pompeji*.

the Casa della Caccia Antica in Pompeii (1986) 22 ff., 36 ff.; *Pompei* VII, 6-8; *LIMC* sv. pygmaioi 47g; *Cappel 1994*, sv. W16.

052 Pompeii

a. Mosaic.
b. VII 4, 56 (Casa del Granduca/della Fontana), viridarium.
c. The south wall of the viridarium is decorated with a nymphaeum; the panel below the niche shows a simple Nilotic scene, framed by a band of white and green tesserae. The picture has been well preserved; in addition a 19th century watercolour by Bazani is available as source of information.
d. In situ.
e. 0-40 AD.

On the river bank one can see a palm, bushes and a simple hut on a podium. On the river itself a hippopotamus hunt is taking place. Two pygmies are sailing towards the hippopotamus. One of them is rowing, while the other stands on the forecastle with a large stone in both his hands which he is about to throw at the animal.



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The east and south walls of the viridarium were decorated with garden paintings. The painting by Balzani clearly shows the original situation with three basins in front of the nymphaeum, and a fountain sculpted as a flower in the middle of these.

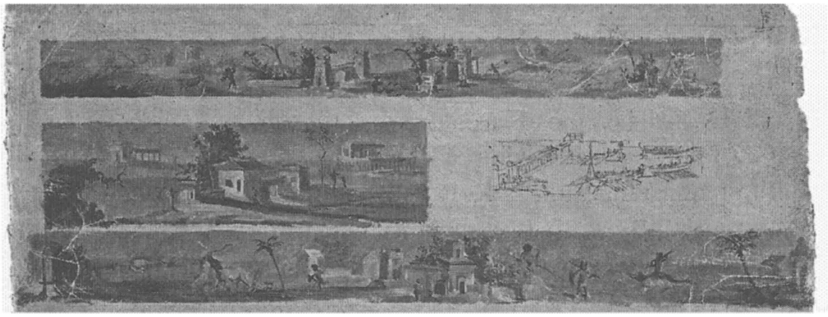
F.M. Avellino, Descrizione di una casa disotterrata in Pompei nell'anno 1833, *MemRegAccErc* 3 (1843) 347 ff.; F.B. Sear, *Roman wall and vault mosaics* (1977) sv. no. 27; *De Vos 1979*, 91; *Cappel 1994*, sv. M6; M. Staub Gierow, *Casa del Granduca (VII 4, 56) und Casa dei Capitelli Figurati (VII 4, 57)* (Häuser in Pompeji) (1994) 34 ff.; *Pompei* VII, 44-45.

053 Pompeii

a. Painting.
b. VII 7, 32 (Tempio di Apollo), peristyle.
c. Originally, a frieze with pygmy scenes was probably placed in the upper zone of the porticus around the peristyle. Nowadays these paintings have disappeared. Three parts can be reconstructed with the aid of a 19th century drawing by Morelli and descriptions. All 20th century illustrations after the original by Morelli only show the peopled scenes of the more extensive landscape.
d. Lost.
e. Around 70 AD.

A: a kiosk-like structure, two storeys high, is connected to a tower by a wall. This structure seems to frame a small wood on the right. Behind the tower two simple, rectangular huts are depicted in detail. The scene is populated by four dwarves: a female dwarf who feeds birds, another dwarf with sticks in his hands standing on a large dolium and two dwarves with fishing rods. On the left of the picture a large palm tree is visible (*Helbig 1868*, 1544a = *Reinach 1922*, 376-3 = *Rostovtzeff 1911*, Abb. 32).
B: a landscape with different kinds of buildings is depicted. On the left is a tower with a thatched roof that protects the upper terrace from the sun. By means of a gate it is connected with another tower. On the right one can see kiosk-like structures and another tower in front of trees and a palm. In the background a round structure and a simple, rectangular hut can be distinguished. Further to the right stands a simple, thatched hut amid trees and palms, surrounded by a low wall. The scene is inhabited by a female dwarf feeding birds, a dwarf with a child and a dwarf walking with a carrying-stick over his shoulder. Helbig also mentions a crocodile (*Helbig 1868*, 1544b).
C: in the middle of the tableau the river is depicted with a dwarf that is being devoured by a crocodile amid the waterplants. On the right

bank one can distinguish three dwarves making a sacrifice in front of a temple. On the left bank a dwarf with a club in his hand is trying to help the unlucky dwarf in the water. Behind him one can see a temple, a high round building with a thatched roof and a simple rectangular hut. Again these structures seem to frame a wood (*Helbig 1868*, 1544c = *Reinach 1922*, 377-5).



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The Apollo temple, originally dating from the 6th century BC, was still being restored in AD 79. The egyptianising frieze decorating the porticus probably belongs to the new decoration phase of after AD 62. Very little has been preserved of the remaining decoration of the temple. A number of statues have been found of various gods: apart from Apollo, also Hermes, Venus and Artemis.

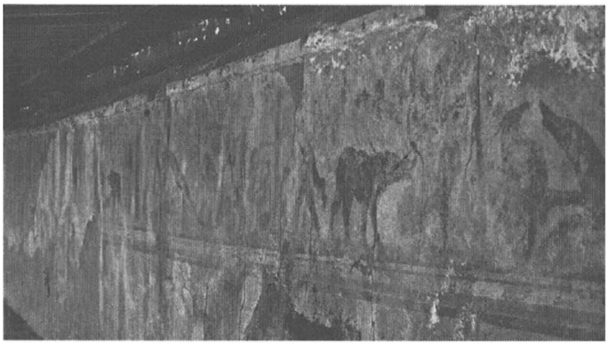
W. Gell, J.P. Gandy, *Pompeiana* (1817) taf. 57, 59, 60; *Helbig 1868*, 1544; *Rostovtzeff 1911*, 57; *Reinach 1922*, 376-2/3, 377-5/6; *Schefold 1957*, 192; *De Vos 1980*, 87 n. 234; *Pompei 1748-1980*, 38; *Moormann 1988*, 196-197 sv. 250; *Pompei* VII, 161; *Cappel 1994*, sv. W18; *Disegnatori*, 113-114 sv. Morelli 56.

054 Pompeii

a. Painting.
b. VII 16 (Insula Occidentalis), 17 (Casa di Ma. Castricius), garden 34 (palaestra?).
c. The frieze-form picture extends along the upper zone of the north wall of the open, lower part of the house. Above the picture terracotta masks have been placed at regular distances from each other. Below the picture, the wall is decorated with palaestra scenes. The colours have badly faded so that only fragments of the painting are still visible.
d. In situ.

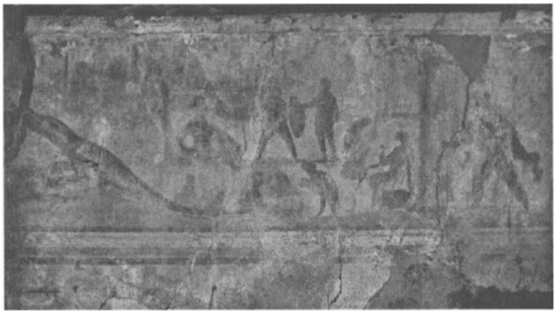
e. Around 70 AD.

The first visible fragment on the west side, which is not the beginning of the picture, shows a quadruped with its head bent to the ground. On the right one can distinguish vaguely a flight of stairs leading towards an entrance. There follow a rock with vegetation and a rope leading to another rock in the background. After a part that has been lost, clearly the front part of a lion is depicted, followed by a tree without leaves. After some rocks a man is visible, whose head is however missing. One can then see an animal with the body of a hippopotamus and the snout of a crocodile, and a man coming out of a gate. The next scene shows a frightened man who raises his hands in the air at the sight of another man who is being swallowed up by an enormous crocodile. Behind the crocodile a strange animal is visible, with the shell of a tortoise, but with a tail and walking on its hind legs. Above the animal a large duck is depicted. Next, one can see two warriors with shields and a spear next to a building. In front of the two-storeyed building Anubis is depicted, sitting on a rock and holding a viper in his right hand. On his right there is a man who is pointing towards Anubis with his right hand and holding a string (?) in his left hand. The next scene shows a hippopotamus/crocodile threatening a man, who raises a stone above his head to defend himself. Also two ducks and, again, an animal that looks like a tortoise, this time leaning on a stick, are depicted. This scene is concluded by a large palm tree. The last scene shows a small quadruped standing on a large rock and being attacked by an enormous crocodile. In the background, towers with windows, a leafless tree and a small building with a pointed roof are visible. On the far right, in the foreground, a large rectangular box (?) is depicted.



74

It seems that not a collection of generic scenes is depicted here, but that the scene has a more specific, perhaps story-telling, meaning. Only the existence of the egyptianising painting is referred to by various authors; no description or interpretation of the picture exists. *Pompei* VII suggests a date in the late Republican period, however, on stylistic grounds a dating around AD 70 seems more probable.



75

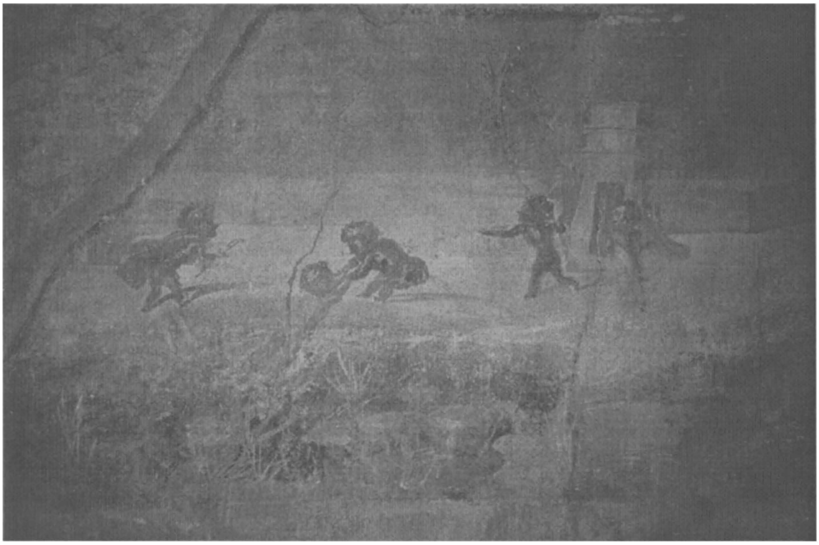
House 17 of the Insula Occidentalis, a luxuriously and richly decorated mansion with a view over the Gulf of Naples, is strongly related to the adjacent house 22 which can be attributed to M. Fabius Rufus. In the last phase of Pompeii, however, they seem to have been two separate complexes. De Vos suggested interpreting room 34 as a palaestra.

De Vos 1980, 87 n. 237; *Pompei 1748-1980*, 165 sv. no. 21a4; *Jashemski 1993*, 204 sv. no. 405; *Meyboom 1995*, III n. 23; *Pompei VII*, 887-889; *Tammisto 1997*, n. 292.

055 Pompeii

a. Painting.
b. VIII 2, 17 (Terme del Sarno), frigidarium.
c. The paintings are executed on two walls (west and north) around a basin in the frigidarium, just above the water level. The painting on the north wall is barely visible today, but has been preserved in a 19th century watercolour. The painting on the west wall has been relatively better preserved. Paintings on the east wall have not been preserved but a Nilotic scene was most likely also depicted there.
d. In situ and lost.
e. Around 70 AD.

A (north wall): in the foreground a river with waterplants is depicted. On the river bank one can see a few thatched huts with dwarves wearing hats, and an ibis. There is a bridge over the water and a dwarf is standing in front of a tower with two palms growing behind it. On the right two ibises are walking towards a palm tree while in the background a papyrus canoe is visible.
B (west wall): on the left walks a dwarf with a bag over his shoulder and a stick in his hand. Next to him a dwarf is being pulled out of the water by two other pygmies. One of these is tied to a tree by a rope and at the same time relieves himself, the other dwarf is behind him and helps to pull the rope. A building complex is visible in the background. On the right another dwarf approaches. Also an ibis is depicted.



76

Koloski Ostrow has suggested that the endangered dwarf on the west wall is sinking into quicksand. This seems unlikely as there is no parallel for this; it seems more probable that the dwarf is being attacked by a crocodile or hippopotamus, as can be seen in many other Nilotic landscapes.

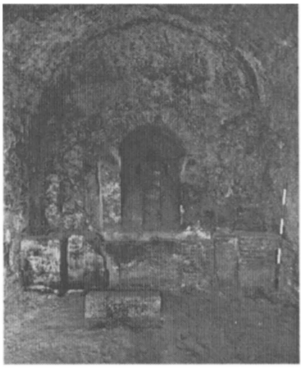
Access to the Sarno thermae was via a long passage from the Via delle Scuole which led to the modest baths. These were built into the terraces of the sloping hill and had a view onto the sea. Allegedly, these thermae were only accessible to women[162]. The frigidarium, the walls of which were decorated with Nilotic scenes, was spanned by a painted stucco vault. The Nilotic landscapes were applied just above the water level. Thus the water of the frigidarium seemed to continue in the water of the Nilotic landscapes, and the bathers could imagine themselves swimming in the Nile.

F. Niccolini, *Le case ed i monumenti di Pompei disegnati e descritti* IV (1896) 'nuovi scavi' tav. 12; *Schefold 1957*, 213; A. Koloski Ostrow, *The Sarno bath complex* (1990) 118 ff. sv. no. 22; *Cappel 1994*, sv. W20; *Pompei* VIII, 94-98.

056 Pompeii

a. Painting.
b. VIII 2, 28 (Casa con ninfeo), room x.
c. The basin of a nymphaeum in this room was decorated with a painting showing a Nilotic landscape. Already at the end of the 19th century the painting had only been fragmentarily preserved.
d. Lost.
e. Around 70 AD.

Mau distinguished an ureaus snake, a duck and different kinds of buildings. According to Sogliano also dwarves "in atteggiamenti osceni" were depicted.



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78

House VIII 2, 28 has been badly preserved. The construction and the furnishing of the nymphaeum of room x can, however, to some extent be reconstructed with the aid of the remains present. The floor of the room was decorated with large blocks of tuff and had a marble frame. The nymphaeum was applied on the rear wall; water appeared from a large recess and flowed via a few steps into a semicircular basin. There was a small canal in front of this, via which the water could flow to the right and left along the painted Nilotic scenes on either side of the basin. A few unrecognisable remains of the painting are still visible on the left side of the basin. Here and there are also some remains of the polychrome mosaic decoration of the nymphaeum. The room had a vaulted roof, decorated with limestone, in an attempt to imitate a cave.

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[162] For the complex in general see Koloski Ostrow (sv. no.) and G. Ioppolo, *Le Terme del Sarno a Pompei* (1992).

A. Mau, Scavi di Pompei 1886-1888, Insula VIII 2, *RM* 2 (1888) 181-189, 187; A. Sogliano, *NSc* (1888) 512; *Schefold 1957*, 216; *Whitehouse 1977*, 63; *Pompei* VIII, 226-228.

057 Pompeii

a. Painting.
b. VIII 2, 34-35 (Casa delle colombe a mosaico), terrace.
c. The painting was located on a wall in front of a fountain in the northeast corner of the terrace. A large fragment (0.38 x 2.95) was still visible to Mau shortly after the excavation of the house.
d. Lost.
e. Around 70 AD.

On the left side of the fragment a crocodile and an armed pygmy face each other. On the right one could distinguish a round hut and a dwarf carrying a bucket, who faces a hippopotamus.

The modest house was named after a famous mosaic that depicts pigeons drinking from a crater (now MN, Napels, 114281), a Hellenistic invention by Sosos, originating from the triclinium. Another triclinium in the house was decorated with an emblema showing exotic animals (now MN, Napels, 114282).

A. Mau, Scavi di Pompei 1884-1885, *RM* 1 (1886) 148-157, 156; *Schefold 1957*, 217; *Jashemski 1993*, 209 sv. 415; *Cappel 1994*, sv. W21; *Pompei* VIII, 264-266.

058 Pompeii

a. Mosaic.
b. VIII 3, 8-9 (Casa del Cinghiale I).
c. The emblema originally formed the centre of a mosaic floor.
d. MN, Naples, 9983.
e. Around 30 BC.

Four ducks between lotus plants are depicted.

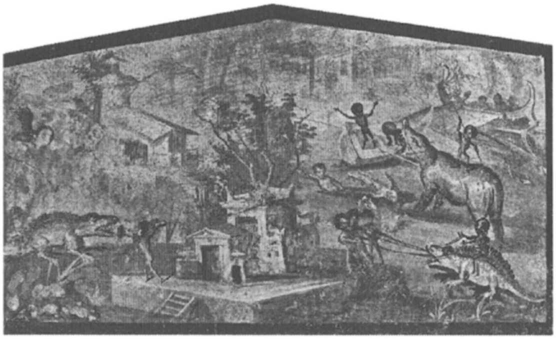
The so-called Casa del Cinghiale has been attributed to Coelius Caldus and is primarily known for the relatively well-preserved mosaic floors, which generally date to the first half of the first century AD. The emblema with a Nilotic character is older. Stylistically it seems related to the Nile mosaic of the Casa del Fauno (cat. no. 047), for instance with respect to the realistic representation of the ducks and lotuses.

Pernice 1938, 168; *Meyboom 1977*, sv. n. 278; *Meyboom 1995*, II n. 137; *Pompei* VIII, 362-363; *Tammisto 1997*, 367.

059 Pompeii

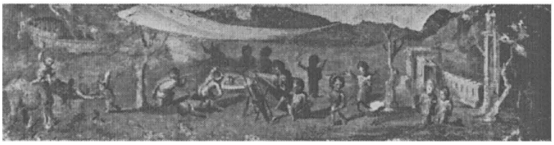
a. Painting.
b. VIII 5, 24 (Casa del Medico), peristylium.
c. On the inside of the podium in the peristyle three paintings were placed. The ones on the north (0.71 x 1.23) and west (0.56 x 2.17) walls are clearly Nilotic in character.
d. MN, Naples, 113195, 113196.
e. Around 70 AD.

A (north wall): a small island with an aedicula, kiosk-like structures and vegetation is depicted in a river. Small steps lead to the water. On the left a pygmy with club and shield attacks a crocodile. Above the crocodile a large black ibis is depicted, while in the background some thatched buildings are visible. On the right three pygmies are pulling a crocodile onto the island, while a fourth dwarf is sitting on the animal. Behind this scene one can see dwarves, two of them in a boat, fighting a hippopotamus. One of them has managed to climb on top of the animal, another one is lying dead in the water. In the background buildings are indicated, as well as a galley with five dwarves on board.



79

B (west wall): between two leafless trees is spread a velum. Four pygmies are reclining on a stibadion, another dwarf sits on the ground near a standing amphora. Drinking bowls stand ready on a table in front of the stibadion. To the right of the velum one can see two dwarves with sticks in their hands and a large walking ibis. Also visible are two women in large cloaks with behind them a building, a porticus and a column on which two statues are placed. On the left a symplegma is taking place between a lying man and a kneeling, wreathed woman. Next to the couple a pygmy, wearing a cloak and tunic, is playing a double oboe. In the foreground a dwarf is being swallowed up by a hippopotamus, while a pygmy wearing a conical hat tries to pull him out. On the animal another pygmy is sitting that is about to hit it with a club. In the background a ship is depicted. The forecastle is shaped like the head of a donkey while many amphorai and a symplegma between a standing man and a bending woman are indicated schematically.



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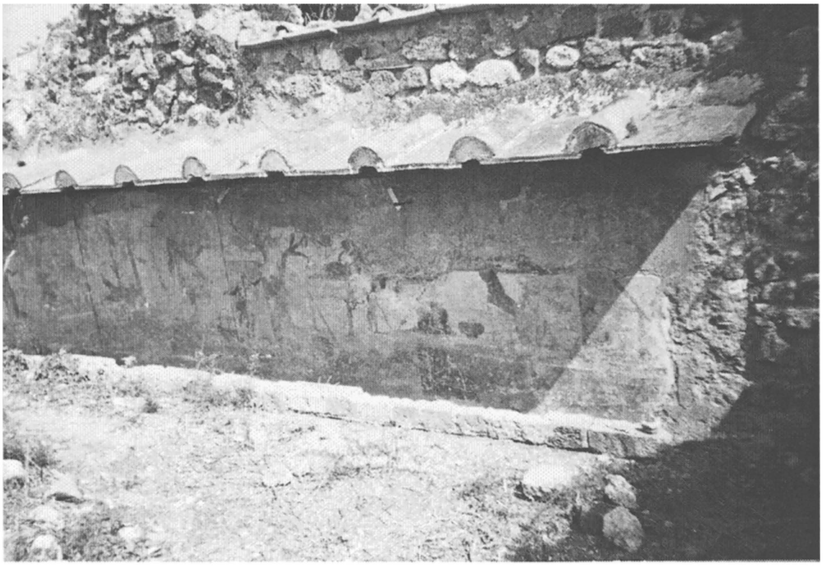
Only the walls of the Casa del Medico are still standing. Apart from the remarkable paintings which decorated the peristyle, little remains of the decoration of the house. The north and west walls showed Nilotic landscapes, while the eastern side showed the Bocchoris- or Solomon's judgement in the world of the dwarves.

A. Sogliano, *NSc* (1882) 322-324; A. Mau, *BdI* (1883) 228-230; A. Mau, *Pompei in Leben und Kunst* (1900) 15; *Reinach 1922*, 161, 162-8; *McDaniel 1932*, 260 ff.; *Schefold 1957*, 217; *Peters 1963*, 180 ff.; *Moor-*

mann 1988, 207 sv. 273; *Jashemski 1993*, 217 sv. no. 442; *Cappel 1994*, sv. W23; *Meyboom 1995*, IV n. 124; *Pompei* VIII, 604.

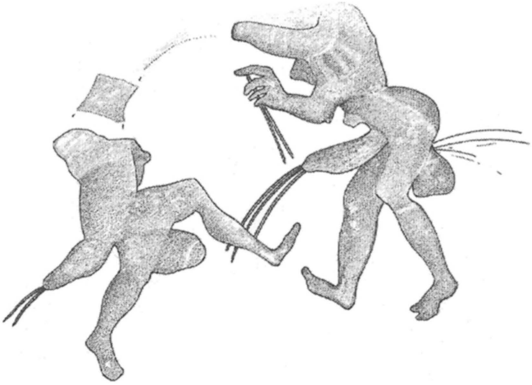
060 Pompeii

a. Painting.
b. VIII 7, 24 (Casa dello Scultore), peristylium.
c. The frieze-form painting decorated the socle of the four peristyle walls and was only interrupted by doors. The socle is about 1.2 high and has a total length of about 50 metres. About 20 metres of painting have been preserved.
d. Five fragments have been set in modern gypsum and are stored in I 8, 17 (Casa dei Quattro Stili). The other fragments are in situ and have been well preserved.
e. Around 70 AD.



81

A (south wall, in situ): on the left a simple house with two nestling birds on the roof is depicted. Next to it one can distinguish a leafless tree, a plant in a jar and a dancing scene: a wreathed woman plays a double oboe, while two ityphallic and caricaturally depicted Blacks are dancing to the music. They both have a large, protruding navel and are depicted urinating, while the Black on the right is holding two sticks in his hand and has breasts as well as a large penis. Next to them a crocodile is approaching from the river. Another dancing Black is depicted in front of a funeral monument from which a tree is growing. Further to the right a (smaller depicted) woman playing a double oboe, a man with a large phallus standing next to cooking pots and a table with food and drinks are still visible. Above this scene a symposion with a reclining woman and man was probably depicted. Further to the right one can see a large leafless tree and another building.



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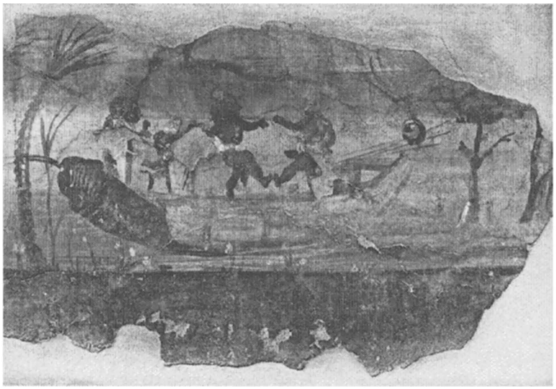
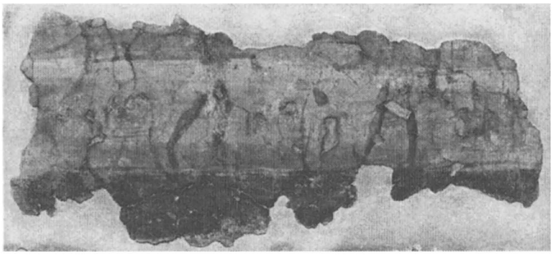
B (north wall, now I 8, 17 a): on the left four ducks are swimming between waterplants, in the background a tower is depicted. On the right some palms are growing and one can see a sailing papyrus boat depicted with its front in the shape of a large phallus. In this vessel, three macrophallic dwarves are dancing and clapping.



83

C (north wall, now I 8, 17 b): again some ducks between waterplants are depicted as well as two dancing men whose heads have not been preserved. One of them is holding two sticks in his hands. Between them a large lotus flower is depicted.



84

C (east wall, now in I 8, 17 c-d-e): the picture shows hunting and palaestra scenes with ityphallic pygmies. A ship is also depicted.

Maiuri dated the paintings to the late Republican era because of the opus incertum on which the plaster was attached; he is followed in *Pompei* VIII ("L'intonaco era steso direttamente sulle antiçhe strutture in opera incerta e pertanto si è ritenuto di poterlo datare alla prima età augustea o ancora all'ultimo periodo repubblicano."). Stylistically, however, this large Nilotic landscape seems to belong to the period of the Fourth Style and should be dated around AD 70. This assumption is supported by the grotesque character of the picture (which has no parallels in the Augustan era) and the combination of Nilotic elements, naumachian and hunting scenes, typical of the Fourth Style.

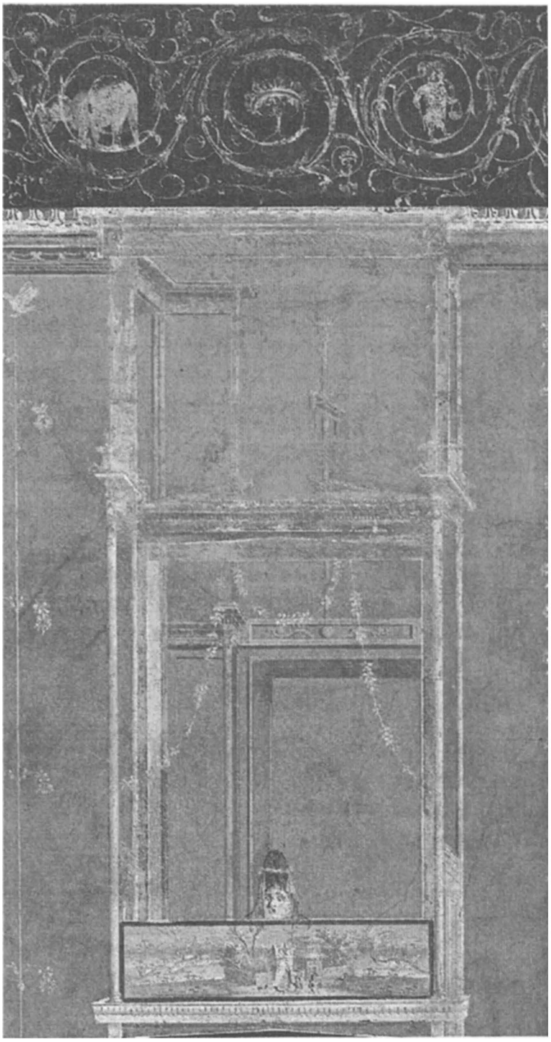
The house, originally excavated from 1796 to 1798, has its main entrance on 24, the workshop that gave the complex its name was on 23, and the entrance 22 opened onto a corridor leading to the higher situated peristyle with the Nilotic landscape, that was only discovered and excavated by Maiuri in the 20th century

A. Maiuri, Una nuova pittura Nilotica a Pompei, *MemLinc* ser. 8, vol. 7 (1956) 65-80; *Peters 1963*, 34 ff.; *Cèbe 1966*, 348; *Kenchrai*, 124-125; *De Vos 1980*, 90; *Pompei 1748-1980*, 165; *LIMC* sv. pygmaioi 44; *Cappel 1994*, sv. W1; *Meyboom 1995*, 82 n. 14; *Pompei* VIII, 718-719; *Pompeii—Picta fragmenta*, sv. 63.

061 Pompeii

a. Painting.
b. VIII 7, 28 (Tempio di Iside), porticus and ekklesiasterion.
c. The east wall of the porticus showed two panels (north side, 0.16 x 0.63; south side 0.16 x 0.58) with a Nilotic landscape populated by dwarves. Panels in the same place in the decoration of other parts of the porticus walls show egyptianising landscapes with a religious atmosphere. The ekklesiasterion was decorated with large mythological paintings in the centre of the walls. Side panels showed landscape paintings with Egyptian sanctuaries surrounded by water. Most of the decoration is lost but can be reconstructed with the help of paintings and engravings made shortly after the excavation.
d. MN, Naples and lost.
e. 62-79 AD.

A (porticus, east wall, north side): island with a thatched hut and a small tower next to some palms and other vegetation. In the foreground two dwarves, one of whom is holding a fishing rod, and some walking ibises are depicted. In the water ducks are swimming between large lotuses and a crocodile swims between the waterplants. In the background another island or piece of land rising from the water seems indicated.
B (porticus, east wall, south side): on an island in the river one can see two towers with a saddle roof which are connected by a footbridge. From behind the towers arise two palms. There is another tower and a thatched hut on the left, and on the right a shaduf. In the surrounding water one can see a crocodile and three ducks between large lotuses. Next to the ducks, another piece of land emerging from the water with a thatched hut and two palms is depicted. In the background again another island seems indicated.
C (ekklesiasterion, south wall): in the centre of the picture a large rock in the water is depicted. The most important feature on the rock is a tree growing between two pillars, forming a single monument crowned by two amphorae. Next to the monument three people can be distinguished, as well as a large ibis. In the background one can see on both sides other plots of lands rising from the water with sanctuaries on them.
D (ekklesiaterion, west wall): an embankment of a river is depicted. On the embankment a leafless tree flanked by two statues of ani-



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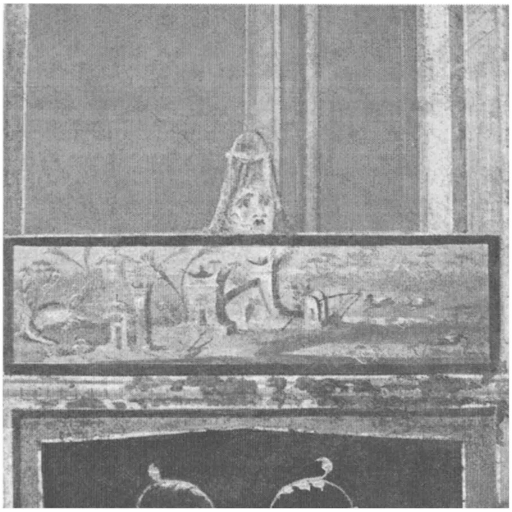
mals on a base are visible. The tree is growing through a round temple a little further on the left. In front of the temple is a round altar, with next to it a sitting priest holding a sistrum in his hands. In the background trees and aediculae are depicted.

E (ekklesiaterion, west wall): again a piece of land in the water is depicted, on the left a large stretch of water is clearly visible. On the island one can see a monument with two pillars through which a leafless tree is growing. A large velum is hanging from one of the



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branches. A person is sitting next to the tree. Behind the monument a round temple is visible with a statue of a goddess on a base. In front of the temple cows are depicted, some walking, some lying down.
F (ekklesiasterion, north wall): a funerary monument is visible on a piece of land surrounded by water. It consists of a sarcophagus with a falcon on top that stands under an aedicula. The aedicula consists of two pillars in the shape of a sarcophagus crowned by a fronton and a small flight of stairs leading to the sarcophagus. On the left one can see a monument with a leafless tree, and on the right an ityphallic herme is placed. In front of the funerary monument a priest is making offerings; on the left side of the island one can distinguish an angler. In the background other pieces of land with sanctuaries are depicted.
G (ekklesiasterion, north wall): two monuments are depicted on a large rock surrounded by water. In the foreground a tree is growing between two pillars. On a separate base a hydreion is placed. Behind this monument one can see a simple temple with a large cypress growing behind it. From the temple a wall which is decorated with vases extends to the left. In the foreground (left) as well as in the background (right) parts of other monuments can be distinguished.

For detailed information and a comprehensive description see *Alla ricerca di Iside.*

The temple of Isis was one of the first buildings to be excavated in Pompeii; the first remains were discovered in 1764 near the theatre. At the time of the excavation, a large part of the paintings had remained in good condition. Together with the find of statues, terracottas and ritual objects, the furnishings of the sanctuary could be reconstructed to a large extent. Panels in the central part of the walls of the porticus showed still lifes, naumachian scenes, and Egyptian landscapes. This latter category has two variants: dwarf landscapes and landscapes with a religious character. The upper zone of the walls of the porticus was decorated with a peopled scroll, in which typical Egyptian subjects such as pygmies, lotuses and hippopotami are shown, as well as depictions connected with the Isis cult, such as sistra and the Apis bull. Only on the ground of these cultic details is the decoration of the porticus linked to the function of the building. All other elements, as well as the scheme of the wall, commonly occur in the decoration of houses and public buildings in the Fourth Style. This does not apply to the paintings in the room interpreted as an ekklesiasterion. The centre panels depict an episode from the myth of the goddess Isis (Io), to which the religious (culture) landscapes on either side are linked[163].

Helbig 1868, 1571; O. Elia, *Le pitture del tempio di Iside* (Monumenti della pittura antica III-3/4, Pompei) (1941); *Schefold 1957*, 233-234; *Peters 1963*, 117, 167-170; *De Vos 1980*, 22 sv. no. 11; *Alla richerca di Iside*, sv, 1.2, 1.10 and 1.62-1.70; P. Hoffmann, *Der Isis-Tempel in Pompeji* (1993); *Adamo Muscettola/De Caro 1994*, 22-36 (J.C. Grenier), 37-56 (F. Zevi), 57-82 (V. Sampaolo); *Cappel 1994*, sv. W24; *Meyboom 1995*, index sv.; *Pompei* VIII, 718-719.

062 Pompeii

a. Painting.
b. IX 5, 9 (Casa dei Pigmei).
c. The pygmy landscapes are located in a small room on the north side of the triclinium. The pictures were painted on the north, east and west walls. Only fragments remain but these have been preserved in good condition. Part of the picture on the north wall is also shown in a 19th century watercolour.
d. In situ.
e. Around 70 AD.

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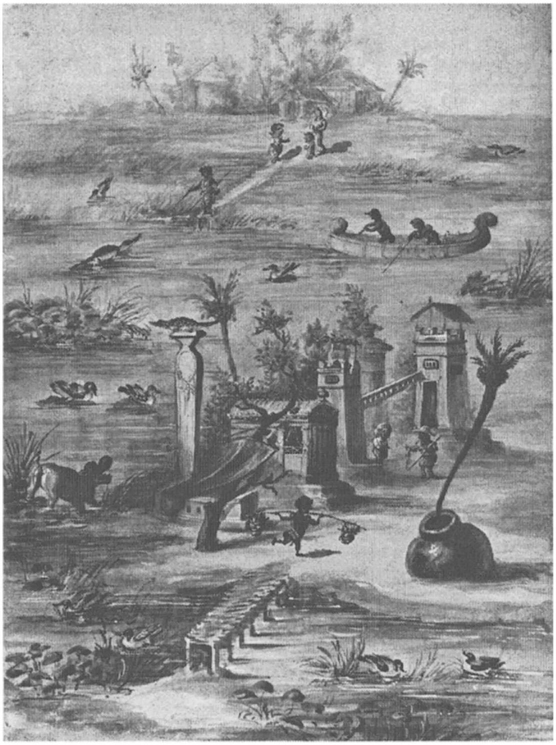
[163] See for the Isis temple in Pompeii also Ch. IV 1.1.2.



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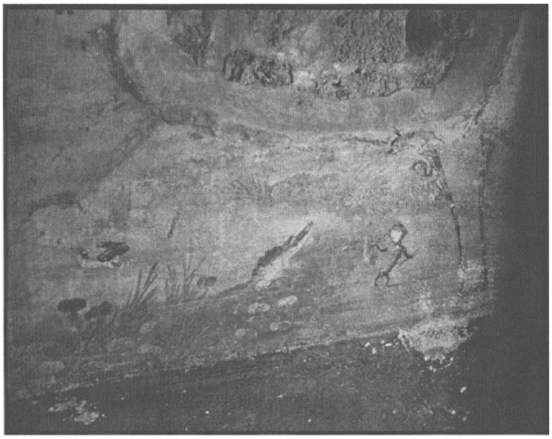
A (north wall): a water landscape with strips of land rising from the water is depicted. The pieces of land are connected by wooden bridges. In the water lotuses and ducks are depicted. On the strip of land in the centre of the picture one can see a tree with a velum. Next to it a black, ityphallic and deformed dwarf with a carrying stick with two baskets on his shoulder walks by. Behind the velum and next to a small temple a high pillar with a statue of Sobek on top on a rectangular basis is visible. The fronton of the sanctuary is crowned with a holy vase containing the sacred water of the Nile. Behind the temple grows vegetation; a palm tree contrasts with the sky. On the right two towers connected by a footbridge are depicted, with next to it two dwarves, while in the background a thatched hut is visible. On the left of the picture one can see a hippopotamus between waterplants, and ducks and a crocodile swimming in the water. On the right a large palm in an enormous pithos is depicted. In the background two pygmies are rowing a papyrus canoe. Further in the background another piece of land with dwarves in front of huts amid vegetation was visible. The picture continued on the right, but the largest part of this is lost. Only in the lower zone a fragment has been preserved showing two deformed dwarves fleeing from a crocodile. One of them is holding two sticks in both hands, and the other climbs a palm tree in order to escape.



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B (east wall): on the north side a small fragment showing a duck amid waterplants has been preserved.
C (south wall): on this wall three large fragments have been preserved. On the east side (to the left of a window) a duck and waterplants are visible. The second fragment is located above the window and shows part of a boat filled with amphorae. On the vessel a shed and dwarf warriors are visible. The third and largest fragment is located on the west side of the wall. One can see an island with a temple and an offering scene taking place in front of a sanctuary. A female dwarf is busy offering, while another woman approaches carrying a basket with offerings on her head. Also another dwarf and a tree next to an altar are depicted. Behind the temple a tower is visible. Lotuses, waterplants and ducks are depicted in the water. Also part of another island is visible with a thatched hut and a palm tree on it.

The Casa dei Pigmei, named after the paintings mentioned above, is a house of modest size. The socles of the walls are decorated with plants, which may point to the Nilotic marshes[164].

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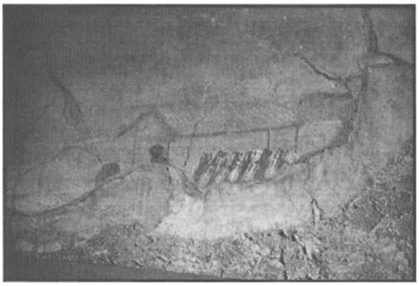
[164] Cf. for instance the socles of the caldarium of the Casa del Criptoportico



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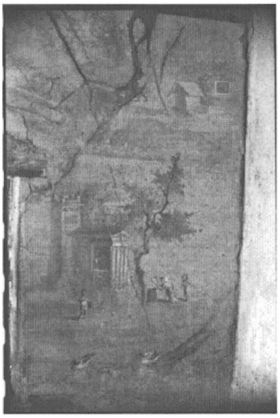

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G. Fiorelli, *NSc* (1877) 274; A. Mau, *BdI* (1879) 135 ff.; G. Spano, Paesaggio nilotico con pigmei difendentisi magicamente dai coccodrilli, *MemLinc* ser. 8, vol. 6 (1955) 335-368; *Schefold 1957*, 255; *Schefold 1962*, 149; *Peters 1963*, 171-172; *Cèbe 1966*, 353; *Whitehouse 1977*, 61; *Pompei 1748-1980*, 165; *Moormann 1988*, 215 sv. 285; *Italienische Reise*, sv. no. 74 and no. 75; G. Cerulli Irelli, M. Aoyagi, S. De Caro, V. Pappalardo, *Pompejanische Wandmalerei* (1990) 252, taf. 90-92 (col. pl.); *LIMC* sv. pygmaioi 47; *Cappel 1994*, sv. W25; *Meyboom 1995*, III n. 85, n. 87; *Pompei* IX, 486.

063 Pompeii

a. Painting.
b. IX 5, 14-16, atrium.
c. The painting was placed on the inside of the balustrade of the impluvium in the atrium.
d. Lost.
e. Around 70 AD.

A (west side): dwarves fighting a crocodile and hippopotamus.
B (north side): symplegma between dwarves in a boat.
C (east side): two dwarves fighting about a girl.
D (south side): two waterbirds.

(cat. no. 032). Prudence is however called for in this interpretation: socles with plants occur regularly, also on walls where the rest of the decoration has no egyptianising character.

Room d of this house showed landscape paintings with, according to Schefold, a statue of Isis next to a tree[165].

A. Mau, *BdI* (1879) 207; *Schefold 1957*, 259-262; *Moormann 1988*, 216 sv. 287/2; *Pompei* IX, 600-601.

064 Pompeii

a. Painting.
b. IX 6, room at the peristyle, probably a triclinium.
c. The painting was placed on a wall to the right of masks of maenads and a satyr. It continued below a pilaster that carried a flight of stairs.
d. Lost.
e. Around 70 AD.

A Nilotic landscape with a statue of Fortuna and dwarves was depicted. Below the pilaster also palms and a phallus (?) could be distinguished.

Other walls of the room showed landscapes with, amongst other things, women offering to Priapus and Hekate; the general decoration of the room thus breathed a Dionysian atmosphere. A terracotta vase in the shape of Isis-Hydreia was found in the house[166].

A. Mau, *BdI* (1881) 24-25; *Schefold 1957*, 265-266; *Moormann 1988*, 217 sv. 290; *Pompei* IX, 720, 722.

065 Pompeii

a. Painting.
b. IX 8, 6 (Casa del Centenario), frigidarium/piscina and nymphaeum.
c. In the bath complex two Nilotic landscapes were located on the east and west walls, in the middle zone above the pool. Only their hastily painted red frame and a small fragment showing a pygmy have been preserved. In the rear of the house a large nymphaeum is located. The walls of a basin in front of it were decorated with waterscapes, among them a marsh scene showing Nilotic plants and animals.

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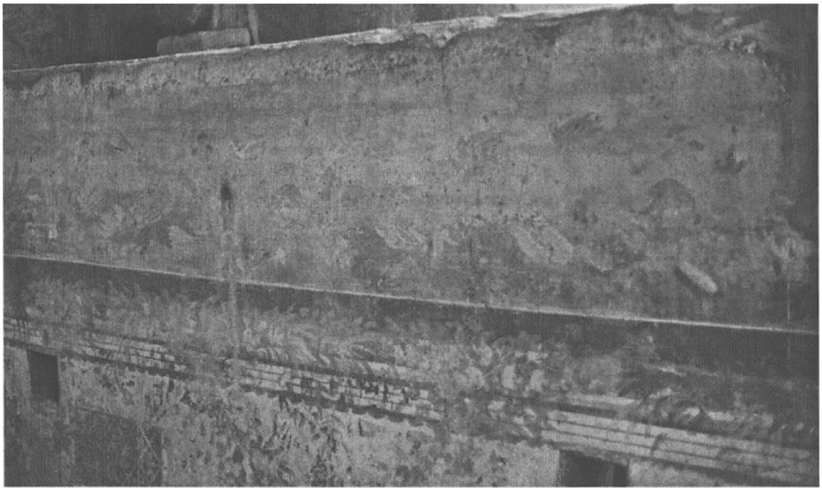
[165] On the (exotic) decorations of the house most recently *Clarke 1998*, 178-187.

[166] The vase is now in the MN, Naples, cf. *Tran Tam Tinh 1964*, 175 sv. no. 144.

d. In situ.
e. Around 70 AD.

A (frigidarium, west wall): Nilotic landscape with "pigmeo incoronato".
B (frigidarium, east wall): Nilotic landscape with an ibis, snake, hippopotamus, crocodiles, ducks and a fishing pygmy.
C (nymphaeum room, west wall): a waterscape with big lotuses is depicted; ducks and fish are swimming in the water.



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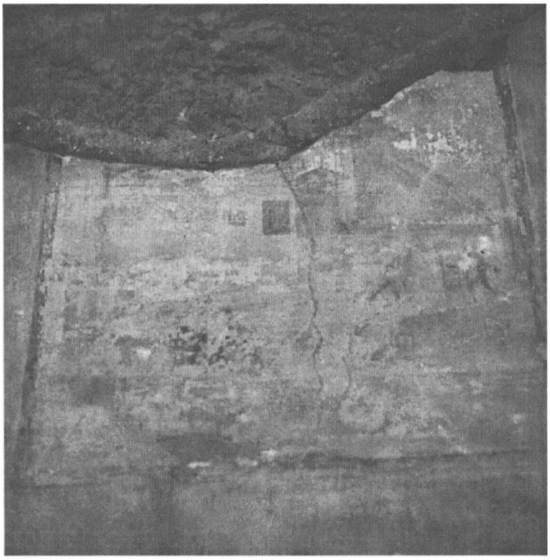
The so-called Casa del Centenario is a large house, originally dating from the 2nd century BC. In AD 79 it had, amongst other things, a double Tuscan atrium, a large peristyle, a private bath and an area for slaves which could be reached by a separate entrance. A graffito dated to AD 15 has been preserved, through which a large renovation of the house could be dated to the beginning of the first century AD, which amongst other things consisted of the introduction of black and white mosaics and early Third Style paintings. During this renovation, a private bath with an accompanying swimming pool were constructed as well. However, the major part of the complex was redecorated in the period of the Fourth Style. A detailed study of the badly preserved decoration shows that there were many Egyptian and egyptianising elements. Paintings near the swimming pool and in the nymphaeum thus had a Nilotic character.

A triclinium still showed Third Style paintings, depicting female followers of the Isis cult. On the walls of a room adjacent to the atrium, there were also small Egyptian figures applied as vignettes, such as a sphinx, a kynokephalos and Isis priests. A 19th century watercolour shows a panel from the house with an Egyptian landscape with a tower, palm trees and a velum. Also one of the landscapes decorating as vista the central part of a wall of the peristyle, possibly had an Egyptian character (fig. below) while triclinium 8 has preserved a small panel on the east wall with a landscape painting showing Egyptian architecture.



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Finally, on the predella in another triclinium, dwarves are painted dancing, hunting animals and harvesting. On its own not egyptianising, but in this context the dwarves may perhaps be connected to the other egyptianising decorations. Not much has been preserved of the remainder of the decoration of the house. In view of the specifically religious character of some of the decoration, combined with the fact that a sistrum and a small bronze statue of Isis were found in the house, it seems reasonable to suppose that the house belonged to a follower of the Isis cult in AD 79[167].

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[167] For a good groundplan and a description of part of the decorative programme of the poorly investigated house see most recently *Clarke 1998*, 161-169 with fig. 56. New investigations are carried out by an equipe from the University of Bologna under the direction of D. Scagliarini; cf. for some first results D. Scagliarini,

E. Presuhn, *Die neuesten Ausgrabungen von 1874 bis 1881* (1882) abb. 9, taf. 3; *Schefold 1957*, 275 ff.; *Tran Tam Tinh 1964*, 158-159 sv. 90 and sv. no. 180; *De Vos 1980*, 35-43 sv. no. 20 and 49-60 sv. no. 23; *Italienische Reise*, sv. no. 92; *Pompei* IX, 903-905.

066 Pompeii

a. Painting.
b. Terme Suburbanae, natatio of the frigidarium.
c. The painting on the east wall (1.8 x 3, at a rough estimate) has been relatively well preserved. The picture on the west wall (1.8 x 2.25, estimated) is only still visible in the centre.
d. In situ.
e. Around 70 AD.

A (east wall): two pieces of land are depicted surrounded by the water of a river. On the left one can see a rocky island with a temple on a podium. The entrance is flanked by statues of sphinxes or lions, garlands are hanging between the pillars of the entrance and in front of the sanctuary is an altar. Two pygmies can be distinguished, one of which is defending himself against a crocodile and a hippopotamus in the water. In the background some buildings and a large porticus are indicated. On the other, larger piece of land two towers are visible, connected by a footbridge. Next to it is a small hut. Two dwarves are standing in front of the buildings, one of them is a female dwarf holding a dish in her hand and is depicted with a large ibis next to her. On the right side of the piece of land stands a shaduf. In the water one can distinguish a hippopotamus, a crocodile and some ducks amid lotuses and waterplants. In the background a vessel may be indicated.
B (west wall): on a piece of land in the river one can see a tower with a saddle roof and some thatched huts. In the foreground two walking pygmies are depicted. On the far left of the panel traces of two dwarves are still visible.

The so-called Terme Suburbane, situated near the Porta Marina, were a complex constructed in several layers which apart from the thermae also contained a brothel. The complex dates from the beginning of the first century AD. Part of the Fourth Style decora-

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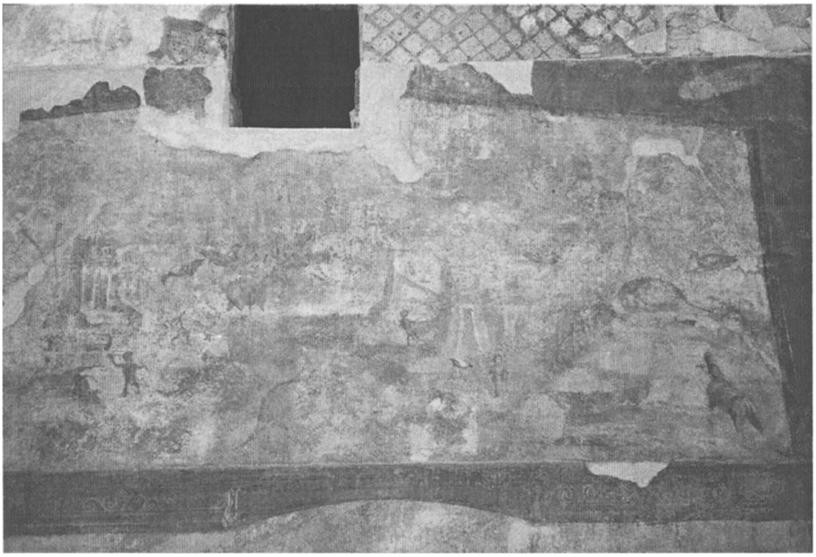
A. Coralini, *L'Alma Mater a Pompei. Le pitture dell' insula del centenario* (exhibition catalogue, 2001).



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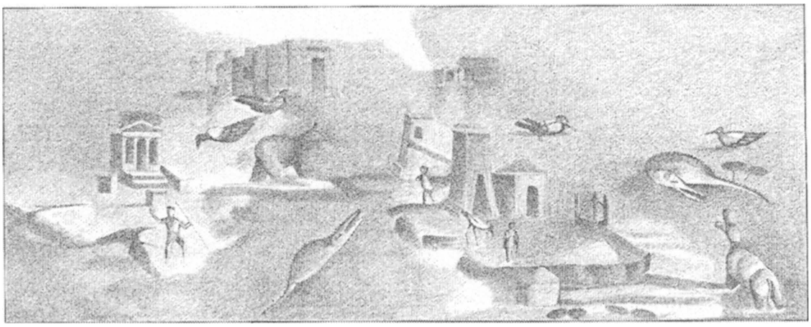

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tion, amongst them the Nilotic landscapes, are restorations from after AD 62. Water plunged from a higher lying nymphaeum into the swimming pool. The four walls around the swimming pool are each decorated with two panels installed above each other. On the east and west walls the lower panel shows a sea goddess between fishes and other aquatic animals, while the accompanying panel in the upper zone depicts a Nilotic scene.

The paintings on the north and south walls show panels with large-sized naumachian scenes[168].

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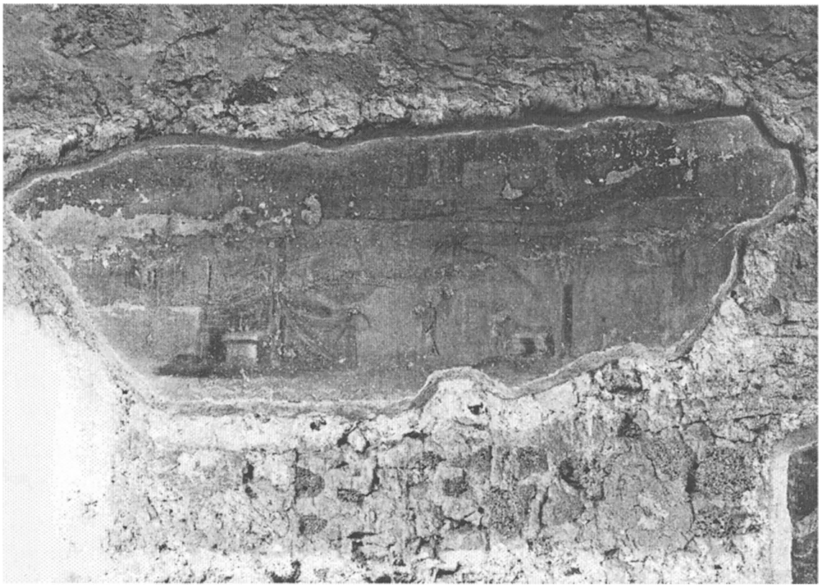
[168] Cf. for all information the mentioned publications by Jacobelli.

L. Jacobelli, Terme Suburbanae: stato attuale delle conoscenza, *RivStPomp* II (1988) 202-203; L.F. Dell'Orto (ed.), *Restaurare Pompei* (1990) 153; L. Jacobelli, Le pitture e gli stucchi delle Terme Suburbane di Pompei, *KölnJbVFrGesch* 24 (1991) 147-152; *Jacobelli 1995*; L. Jacobelli, Vicende edilizie ed interventi pittorici nelle Terme Suburbane a Pompei, *MededRom* 54 (1995) 154-166.

067 Pompeii

a. Painting.
b. Villa dei Misteri, atrium and tablinum.
c. Five fragments of painting have been preserved on the south and north walls of the atrium. They probably originally constituted an egyptianising frieze placed in the upper zone of the atrium walls. The frieze would have been 1-1.5 m high and have had a considerable length. In a tablinum (room 2) a frieze showing egyptianising figures and simple Nilotic scenes is placed above the socle of every wall.
d. In situ.
e. 80-70 BC (atrium), around 10 BC (tablinum).

A (atrium, north wall, right side): this fragment is the largest of the five and has been best preserved. A bird's eye view of a polychrome river landscape with buildings is depicted. On the far left the upper part of a building with saddle roof is visible, as well as a square tower. The buildings are standing on a small island or a piece of land that arises from the water. In the foreground one can see a column to which a large velum is attached. The velum is held up at the other side with some poles, while an altar with offerings stands under it. From both sides a woman approaches. On the right there is another column between two palm trees. On top of the capital a large statue is placed, flanked by two smaller ones. Next to the column an altar is visible on which a man places his offerings. A woman is walking by. On the other side of the water one can distinguish the corner of a podium with a flight of stairs. On the podium one can see a square building, with a woman and some other people standing in the entrance. On the river a boat with the stern shaped like the head of an animal comes sailing along.
B (atrium, north wall, centre): a boat is vaguely visible, as well as a pier with a tower at the far end. Around 1931 Maiuri still could see two other boats, a traveller and a shepherd with two goats.



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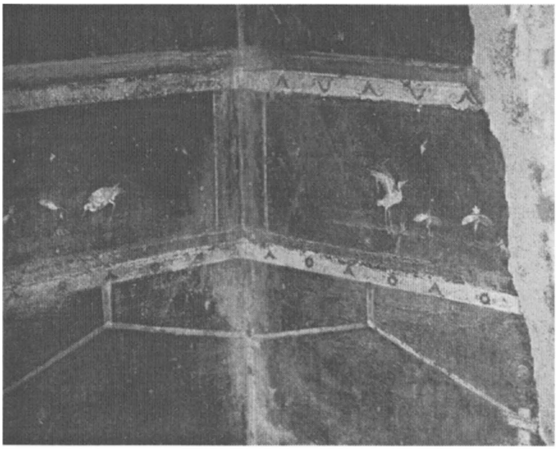
C (atrium, north wall, left side): a watery landscape is depicted with people walking on a bridge or dike.
D (atrium, south wall, right): the fragment shows a building connected to a round tower by a porticus.
E (atrium, south wall left): structures probably belonging to the same building complex as in fragment D can be distinguished.
F (tablinum): above the socle of every wall runs a frieze showing Egyptian figures and scenes. Gods and goddesses flanking an altar or animal can be seen, as well as simple Nilotic scenes showing waterbirds between large (lotus)plants.



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Ehrhardt 1987, 145-148 considers the paintings in the tablinum to be a Fourth Style imitation. I follow the original view by Bastet/De Vos.

The so-called Villa dei Misteri was, apart from a country estate, also a centre of agricultural activities. Originally the villa dates from the first half of the second century BC. A large-scale redecoration took place in about 60 BC. The Nilotic frieze in the atrium dates from before that period and was not removed or repainted but incorporated into the new decoration programme. If one assumes that the frieze also extended over the south wall, it would have been almost 40 metres long. The visitor to the atrium would have been impressed by this view of Egypt above the stately black panels.

The Egyptian motifs in miniature, amongst them a number of Nilotic scenes with birds among lotus flowers, dates to the Augustan period and can be found in the tablinum directly behind the atrium.

In a room which probably served as triclinium are the famous wall-paintings which gave the villa its name. In these fragments from the life of Dionysos, which probably refer to the pantomime, the personifications of the four seasons occur[169]. 'Autumn', adorned with a laurel wreath, is pouring water from a small jug, thus symbolising the flooding of the Nile as a specific feature of the abundance of this season.

The attribution of the ownership of the villa is controversial. During the excavations a seal of L. Istacidius Zosimus was found, a freedman of the Istacidii, who had been living in Pompeii for centuries. It therefore seems probable that a member of that family managed or owned the villa in AD 79. On the ground of amongst other things the find of a statue of Empress Livia, it has been assumed that the villa belonged to Octavian in the last quarter of the first century AD[170].

NSc (1910) 139; A. Maiuri, *La Villa dei Misteri* (1931) 47-48, 198, 200-201, 235 (atrium) 202-203 (tablinum); *Beyen* I, 54, 61; *Schefold 1957*,

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[169] The interpretation by F.L. Bastet, Fabularum dispositas explicationes, *BABesch* 49 (1974) 207-240, which is followed here, is broadly speaking still the most convincing. For an overview of the most recent literature and interpretations, see G. Sauron, *La grande fresque de la villa des mystères à Pompei* (1998) 157-158.

[170] For this last attribution, cf. *Meyboom 1995*, V n.10. The villa has been published by A. Maiuri, *La Villa dei Misteri* (1931). For a coherent discussion of the decoration programme in the Second Style, cf. *Tybout 1993*.

296; *Peters 1963*, 7-10; *Von Blanckehagen 1963*, 112-113 n. 48; *Tran Tam Tinh 1964*, 151-152 n. 64 (tablinum); K. Fittchen, Zur Herkunft und Entstehung des 2. Stills, in: P. Zanker (ed.), *Hellenismus in Mittelitalien* (1976) 539 ff., 547, 563; *Ling 1977*, 7 ff.; *Bastet/De Vos 1979*, 56-57 n. 30 (tablinum); *De Vos 1980*, 9-12 sv. no. 4 (tablinum), 77; *Moormann 1988*, 224 sv. no. 306-1; *Tybout 1989*, 340; *Clarke 1991*, 94 ff; *Meyboom 1995*, 81 ff. and index sv.

068 Pompeii

a. Painting.
b. Villa di Diomede.
c. The paintings of the villa, which was excavated in the 18th century, have only been preserved in etchings by Morelli, Chiantarelli and others. Their original form is thus sometimes difficult to reconstruct. Small panels in the centre of subdivisions of one the walls of the first floor showed Nilotic landscapes with pygmies.
d. Lost.
e. Around 70 AD.

ADS 1135: two panels in the centre of the wall show pygmies between a pyramid and a shaduf (left) and in front of buildings (right).

Other etchings (ADS 1152-1155) show a wall with small panels in the upper zone. In these a river is clearly visible with (in the case of ADS 1154) a boat. It is not clear whether or not the paintings had a Nilotic character. The same applies to ADS 1172 which shows the inside decoration of the porticus with two ducks amid rushes.

In the Fourth Style, small panels with dwarf landscapes often occur in the upper or central zone of the wall; the decorations of the porticus of the Isis temple in Pompeii (cat. no. 061) are a striking analogy. It is quite conceivable that the panels with ducks above the porticus had a Nilotic character: the peristyle porticus of the Casa delle Nozze d'Argento (cat. no. 041) was decorated in a similar manner[171].

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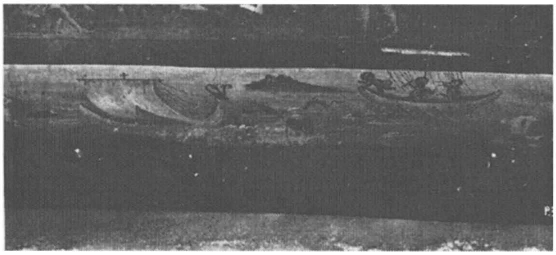
[171] The villa was excavated in the years 1771-1774. Cf. A. Maiuri, R. Pane, *La Casa di Loreio Tiburtino e la villa di Diomede in Pompei* (1947) 11-17, with groundplans and reconstruction drawings, but without a discussion of the decoration; T.H.M. Fontaine, *Baugeschichtliche, typologische und stilistische Untersuchungen zur sogenannten Villa di Diomede in Pompeji* (1991), and *La Rocca/De Vos 1994*, 353-354. See for the Fourth Style paintings specifically T.H.M. Fontaine, Die Dekorationen Vierten Stils der Villa di Diomede in Pompeji, in: *Moormann 1993*, 64-71.

Disegnatori, 84-85 sv. Morelli no. 18, 132-133 sv. Chiantarelli no. 19.

069 Pompeii

a. Painting.
b. Porta Vesuvio, tomb of Vestorius Priscus.
c. The frieze-like painting is located on the lower side of a wall. The colours have faded badly and the picture is nowadays hardly visible.
d. In situ.
e. Around 75 AD.

On the far left an island or piece of land is visible with a dwarf standing on his left leg and turning his head back. In the water in front of him one can see a fish and a boat, seemingly without any passengers. After an island, again animals in the water and a boat are depicted. The vessel has a pole with rolled up sails, crowned by a lunar disc, a symbol of Isis. Three naked and ityphallic pygmies are on board. The dwarf on the left is looking at a dolphin and fishes in the water, another one is dancing with two sticks in both hands, while the third pygmy is playing a double oboe.



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For an extensive description and interpretation, see Mols/Moormann.

The tomb of Vestorius Priscus, which can be found just outside the Porta Vesuvio, has been relatively well preserved and the paintings applied to the interior of the tomb have been discussed several times. Apart from general subjects frequently appearing in paintings of that period, a number of scenes from the life of the deceased was also painted on the walls of the tomb. The decoration was applied in a manner that allowed for the shape of the tomb, as well as the direction followed by visitors. One person was interred in the tomb: Vestorius Priscus, who was an aedile in AD 70/71 and died in that period at the age of 22. According to the most recent interpretation of Mols and Moormann, the paintings should not be interpreted in a strictly funerary sense, as many of the depicted elements also appear in house decorations of that time. The notion behind the whole concept would have been representation ("show-off"). The Nilotic scene with dwarves is linked by the above-mentioned authors, after comparing it with a number of parallels, with the banquet. Above the Nilotic scene with dwarves, a symposium scene was applied. These two would form an entity and point to the life of Vestorius Priscus and the festive orgies, possibly graced by performances by dwarves, which he had had.

G. Spano, La tomba dell'edile C. Vestorio Prisco in Pompei, *MemLinc* 7, 3 (1943) 237-315; J.M. Dentzer, La tombe de C. Vestorius dans la tradition de la peinture italique, *MEFRA* 74 (1962) 533-594; *LIMC*, sv. pygmaioi 47h; S.T.A.M. Mols, E.M. Moormann, La tomba di Vestorius Priscus come fenomeno della rappresentanza post-62, in: *Archäologie und Seismologie. (La regione Vesuviana dal 62 al 79 D.C. Problemi Archeologici e sismologici. Colloquium Boscoreale 1993)* (1995) 161-168; *Cappel 1994*, sv. W27; S.T.A.M. Mols, E.M. Moormann, 'Ex parvo crevit'. Proposta per una lettura iconografica della tomba di Vestorius Priscus fuori Porta Vesuvio a Pompei, *RivStPomp* 6 (1993-1994) 15-52.

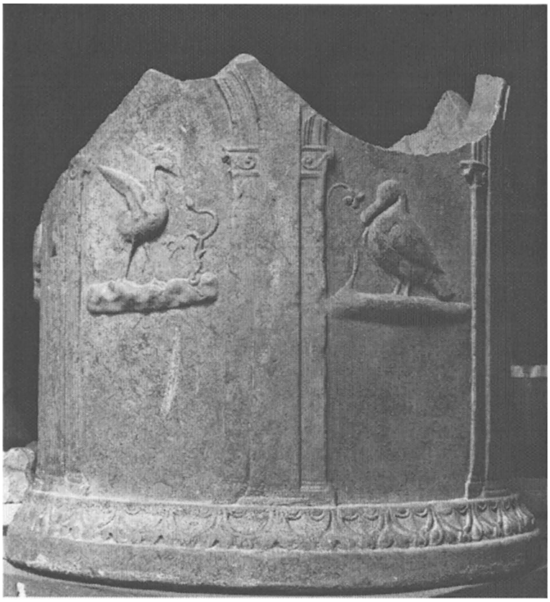
1.2.4 *Pozzuoli*

070 Pozzuoli (Puteoli)

a. Relief.
b. Unknown.
c. The marble puteal has been preserved to a maximum height of 0.57, while the original height will have been about 0.80. The diameter measures 0.56. Around the cylinder 6 arcades have been sculpted, each showing a Nilotic subject.
d. MN, Naples, 140513 (reserves).
e. 25 BC–AD 25.

In total six Nilotic subjects have been sculpted, all shown through an arcade: an ibis fighting a snake, a duck, a hippopotamus, a pygmy and a crocodile, a duck, and another hippopotamus.

It concerns a marble basin; the drainage hole is still present. According to Elia, the object was made in Italy. The composition with



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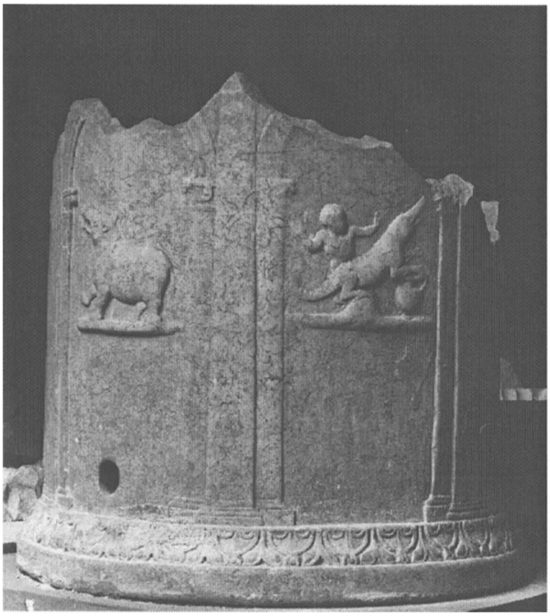

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the arcades recalls the Campana plates (cat. no. 027)

The puteal was found in 1922 in the area southeast of the amphitheatre, together with the head of a statue of a young man and a relief fragment. The context remains unknown.

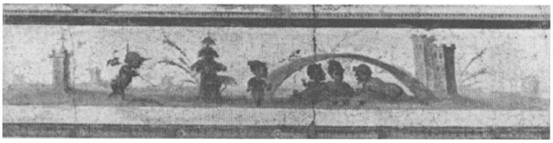
O. Elia, Pozzuoli. Vaso marmoreo in forma di puteale, *NSc* (1930) 395-399; T.M. Golda, *Puteale und verwandte Monumente. Eine Studie zum römischen Ausstattungsluxus* (1999) 88 sv. no. 26.

1.2.5 *Stabiae*

071 Stabiae

a. Painting.
b. Villa Campo Varano, diaeta on the west side of the summer-triclinium (room E).
c. Three pygmy scenes constitute the central predella of the walls. They measure (respectively) 0.22 x 0.76, 0.21 x 0.76 and 0.22 x 0.89.
d. MN, Naples, 9095, 9098, 9099.
e. 50-60 AD.

A (MN, Naples, 9095): the white band in the foreground seems to indicate the water of a river. On the shore one can distinguish dwarves amid huts, other buildings and vegetation. On the left a dwarf is walking with a stick and sack over his shoulder. Next to a thatched hut another dwarf is feeding some animals. On the right one can see two tower-like structures and two walking dwarves, one of which has a beard and a hat.
B (MN, Naples, 9098): on the left two dwarves are visible, one of which is holding a stick and carrying a basket. In the middle are buildings and trees with a dwarf in front of them. On the right a pygmy with a hat is holding a carrying stick with two baskets on his shoulders and is walking in the direction of some buildings. Also a palm growing in a large amphora is visible.
C (MN, Naples, 9099): three dwarves are reposing under a velum. Two other pygmies are approaching from the left, one of which is holding a stick and sack over his shoulder. In the middle of the picture one can see a thatched shed, while in the background towers are depicted.



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For an extensive description and interpretation see Allroggen-Bedel.

In the antiquarium of Castellammare di Stabia a small fragment of wall-painting shows a shaduf. The depiction of this element is so typical that a Nilotic scene can be reconstructed. De Vos states that the fragment possibly comes from the Villa Campo Varano.

The vast villa 'in Campo Varano' near Stabiae, sometimes also referred to as 'villa di Arianna' was excavated by Karl Weber in the 1750s and 1760s. Many paintings were published in the *pitture d'Ercolano.* Excavations in the second half of the 20th century, together with Weber's excavation reports, make it possible to reconstruct an important part of the plan of the complex, as well as the context of a large number of paintings cut away at that time[172]. The Nilotic scenes with dwarves were in a room adjoining a summer triclinium. They are not the only Egyptian or egyptianising elements in the decorations of the villa. In room 25, adjacent to the small peristyle, paintings of two Egyptian priestesses and three Egyptian priests were discovered. The priestesses are holding the hydreion in their hands, and the priests are carrying situlae, aspersoria and a sistrum[173]. In the adjacent room 26 or in the adjacent corridor, a large number of vignettes were found, painted on a red background with sanctuaries in a rural setting. One of these (MN 9397) shows a sanctuary bordering on water; the architecture cannot, however, be called typical Egyptian[174]. Without doubt Egyptian though is the

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[172] Cf. the sv. no. mentioned publication by Allroggen-Bedel. Important for villae rusticae in the environment of Pompeii in general is V. Kockel, Funde und Forschungen in den Vesuvstädten I, *AA* (1985) 495-571, 531 ff., with amongst other things a general map of many remains found and their naming; see now further A. Oettel, *Fundcontexte römischer Vesuvvillen im Gebiet um Pompeji. Die Grabungen von 1894 bis 1908* (1996).

[173] The five vignettes have been combined in one modern frame (MN 8972). Cf. Allroggen-Bedel (sv. no.) 36-37.

[174] The paintings are dated in the period of the Third style; cf. Allroggen-Bedel (sv. no.) 41-43. A landscape has been preserved in another small room (W 7) in this part of the complex, showing a building with porticoes on the water (MN 9391). Already earlier it has become clear that this kind of representation can perhaps be interpreted as egyptianising, cf. Allroggen-Bedel (sv. no.) 50-55.

Ammon mask which was applied as a vignette in a small room next to a triclinium[175].

Helbig 1868, 1531, 1530, 1532; *Reinach 1922*, 162-3, 162-4, 162-5; A. Allroggen-Bedel, Die Wandmalereien aus der Villa in Campo Varano (Castellammare di Stabia), *RM* 84 (1977) 27-89, 68-74 (with previous literature); *De Vos 1980*, 69 sv. no. 27c-3 (fragment in the antiquarium); *Ehrhardt 1987*, 89-90; *Cappel 1994*, sv. W32.

072 Stabiae

a. Painting.
b. Villa di San Marco, peristyle porticus.
c. The paintings have the form of a frieze and measure about 0.2 x 1. It concerns landscapes that form the lower part of a panel in the centre of the decoration of the wall. Two Nilotic landscapes have been preserved in the collections of the MN, Naples. They are also known by faithful engravings in the *pitture d'Ercolano.* A third example, only known by an engraving in the *pitture d'Ercolano*, is now lost.
d. MN, Napels, 8511, 8512; lost.
e. Around 70 AD.

A (MN, Napels, 8511): on the right side of the picture a river is visible. A crocodile hiding in the marshes is being attacked by a man with a spear. On the left various buildings can be distinguished. An Egyptian towerhouse is visible, as well as a large velum hanging from a tree. Next to it a large standing sarcophagus seems to be used as a kind of shaduf. In front of the buildings various people are walking. In the background some towers are visible.
B (MN, Napels, 8512): on the right side of the picture a donkey is being attacked by a crocodile emerging from the water. On the left an aedicula, a temple and some other buildings are depicted. In front of the buildings some people are walking.
C (lost): a marsh landscape with some trees and bushes is depicted. In it one can see two huts, as well as a round structure. The Egyptian character is clear from the hydreion standing on a base next to the river.

The so-called Villa di San Marco has a relatively large peristyle. The

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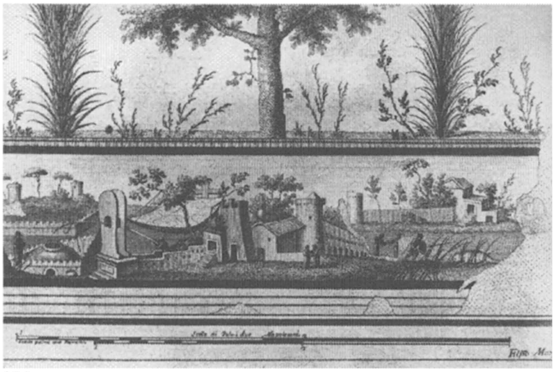
[175] MN 9545, deriving from room W3, cf. Allroggen-Bedel (sv. no.) 59-64.



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central part of the wall of the surrounding porticus was decorated with garden paintings, meant as vistas. In the foreground a garden was painted; occasionally, however, this part of the wall is covered by a panel with a Nilotic landscape. Based on the remains still present in situ it can be concluded that the two variations were applied alternately, at least where it concerns the length of the porticus. Waterscapes in the atrium also seem to betray Nilotic inspiration.

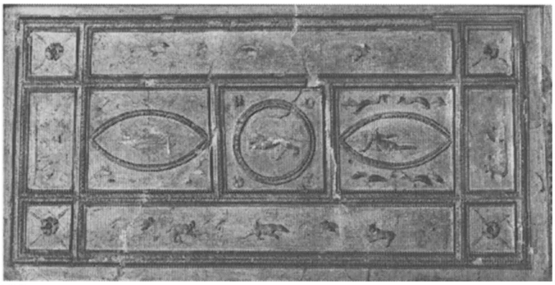
Ehrhardt 1987, 88-89; *Moormann 1988*, 120 sv. 049 (MN 8512); A. Allroggen-Bedel, Die 'Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen' als Problem der Wandmalereiforschung, in: *Moormann 1993*, 145-153; *Cappel 1994*, sv. U2/U3; A. Allroggen-Bedel, in: A. Barbet, P. Miniero (eds.), *La villa di San Marco a Stabia* (1999).

073 Stabiae

a. Relief.
b. A villa rustica near Stabiae (Casa di Miri), bath.
c. The ceiling of one of the rooms of the private bath was partly decorated with a Nilotic frieze measuring 0.20 x 1.5.
d. MN, Naples, 9582.
e. 50-79 AD.

The water in the foreground is indicated by undulating lines. In the river two hippopotami, a crocodile and two ducks are swimming amid large lotus flowers.

The corresponding frieze at the other end of the central panel shows flowers and birds, however without any Nilotic elements.



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E. Ruggiero, *Scavi di Stabia*, 267-271; H. Mielsch, *Römische Stuckreliefs* (1975) 155 sv. no. K 68.

074 Stabiae

a. Inlaid glas.
b. Around San Marco.
c. A large number of obsidian fragments were found on the site of antique Stabiae. Four trays of black obsidian inlaid with glass can be reconstructed. One of these, a (fragmentarily preserved) phiale, is decorated with a Nilotic landscape.
d. MN, Napels.
e. 100 BC- 79 AD.

A Nilotic landscape with crocodiles, hippopotami and waterbirds is depicted.

The other three trays also have an egyptianising decoration. The technique used is typically Egyptian. The objects thus probably come from an Alexandrian workshop. Elia and Malaise date them to the beginning of the first century BC, Bianchi Bandinelli suggests the first century AD.

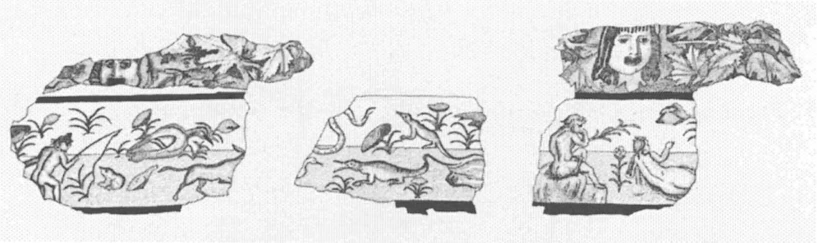
O. Elia, Le coppe ialine di Stabiae, *BdA* 42 (1957) 97-103; T.E. Haevernick, Beiträge zur Geschichte des antiken Glases XI, Obsidianarbeiten, *JRGZM* 10 (1963) 122-130; R. Bianchi Bandinelli, *Rome. Le centre de pouvoir* (1969) 203; *Malaise 1972a*, 293; G. Kater-Sibbes, M. Vermaseren, *Apis* I-II (1975) sv. no. 308; S. De Caro, *Il museo archeologico nazionale di Napoli* (1994) 111.

1.2.6 *Unknown*

075 Campania, unknown

a. Mosaic.
b. Unknown.
c. It concerns two fragments of a polychrome Nilotic frieze, framed by vegetal ornaments and theatrical masks. The largest fragment (0.48 x 1.06) consists of two pieces, the second fragment (0.45 x 0.55) is smaller but has been better preserved. The fragments have been set in modern gypsum.
d. MN, Naples, without inventory number.
e. Around 20 BC.

A (large fragment, piece 1): next to some flowers, among them a lotus, a dwarf is fishing. On the right one can distinguish a frog, a duck amid waterplants and part of the body of a dog (Lancha) or, in my opinion, a donkey.
B (large fragment, piece 2): in the upper register the hostile encounter of a cobra with a mongoose is depicted. One can also distinguish a crocodile attacking an ibis, as well as some waterplants, a flower and a duck.
C (smaller fragment): a pygmy is sitting on a rock on the bank of a river. A woman is lying in the water, wearing a voile. She is perhaps making a gesture with her hand (Lancha) but it seems more likely, when the picture is compared to depictions of the same subject on the Campana reliefs, that she is holding a drinking vessel. Both persons are viewed from the rear. Between them a yellow flower with a blue heart is depicted.



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For an extensive description and interpretation see Lancha.

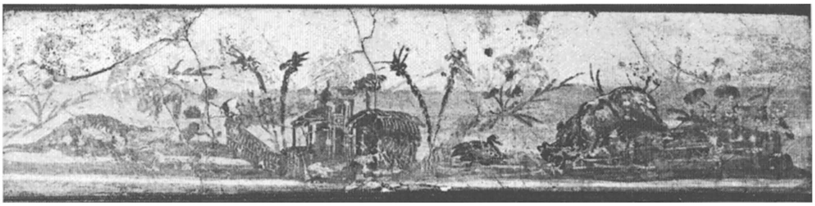
The proportions are depicted rather clumsily. Lancha therefore supposes that a local Campanian workshop made this mosaic with the use of extensive Alexandrian models. The iconography of a nearly naked woman lying on a bench and viewed from the rear can also be seen in the Campana reliefs (cat. no. 027).

J. Lancha, Deux fragments d'une frise nilotique inédite au musée national de Naples, *MEFRA* 92-1 (1980) 249-276.

076 Campania, unknown

a. Painting.
b. Unknown.
c. The painting (0.38 x 1.41) comes from the upper zone of a wall and has been badly preserved. The upper left side is missing and many cracks can be seen.
d. MN, Naples, 8561.
e. Around 70 AD.

A crocodile swims among waterplants. On a piece of land a tower-like structure and a hut are visible between palms inside a surrounding wall. On the right the river is again depicted. A duck and a hippopotamus are swimming amid waterplants. In the background large lotuses are depicted.



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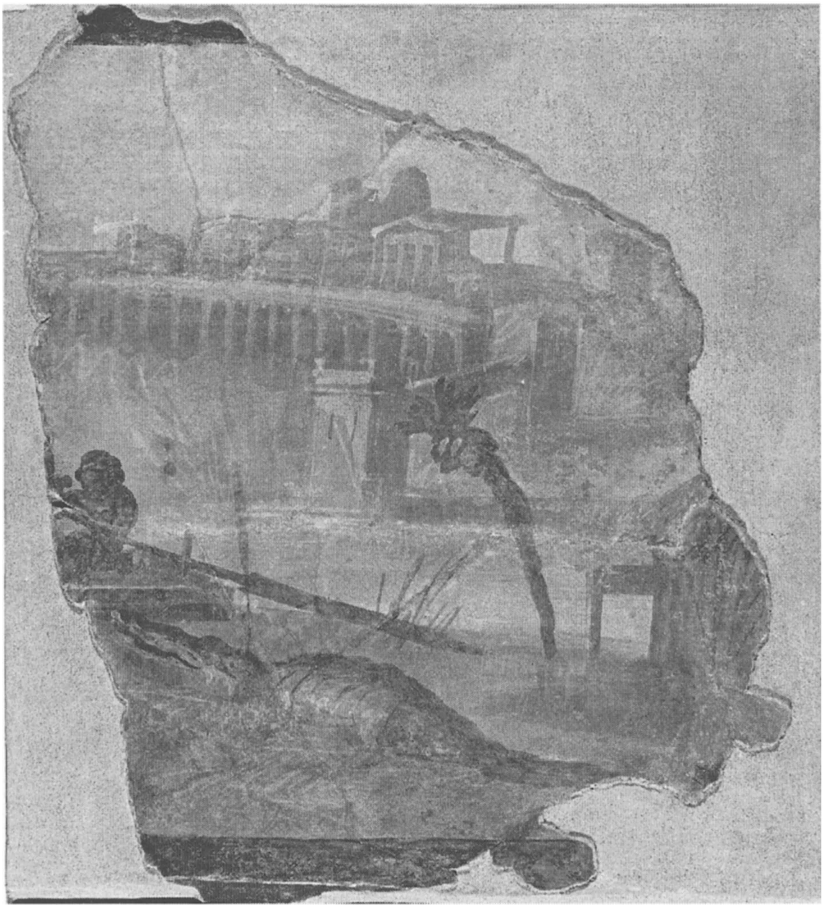
Pompeji. Leben und Kunst in den Vesuvstädten (exhibition catalogue, Essen) (1973), 190-191 sv. no. 223.

077 Campania (?), unknown

a. Painting.
b. Unknown.
c. It concerns a fragment of 45.7 x 38.
d. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu, 72.AG.86.
e. Around 70 AD.

A crocodile attacks a boat on which a dwarf with a punting pole is still visible. On the right a reed hut and a palm tree are depicted.

Porticoes and other buildings on the water's edge can be seen in the background.



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Cappel 1994, sv. W34; *Masterpieces of the J. Paul Getty Museum* (1997) 115.

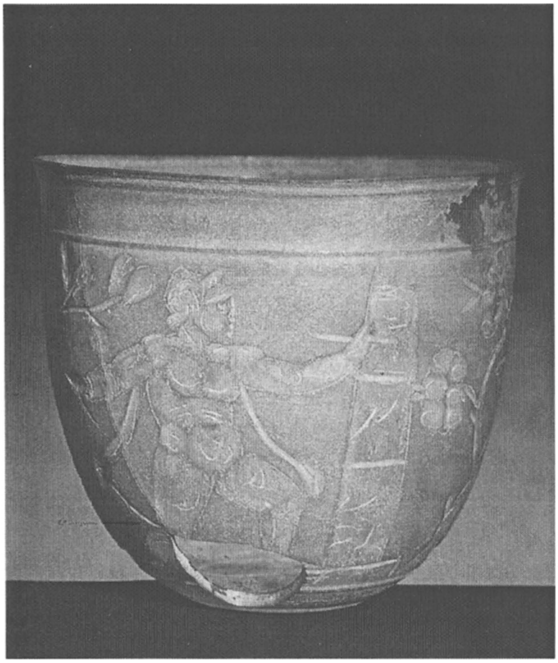
078 Campania (?), unknown

a. Glass engraving.
b. Unknown.
c. The Nilotic scene is engraved on a round cup with a height of 8.6 and a diameter of 9.9.

d. BM, London, 1868.5-1.919. Former Slade collection.
e. 200-220 AD.

A reclining woman in voile with a sistrum and a patera in her hands lies next to a tree in front of a (reed) building on a podium with another tree growing from behind. At the other side a young, nude male inscribes a Nilometer.

Harden (in *Glass of the Caesars*) thinks the woman to be Isis. The iconography recalls the Campana plates (cat. no. 027) and the Naples mosaic (cat. no. 075) showing a reclining woman in an Egyptian landscape[176].



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D.B. Harden, Ancient Glass II: Romans, *The archaeological journal* 126 (1970) 55-56, 74; *Glass of the Caesars*, 200 sv. no. 109.

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[176] See for this figure and a possible identification Ch. III 4.3.4.

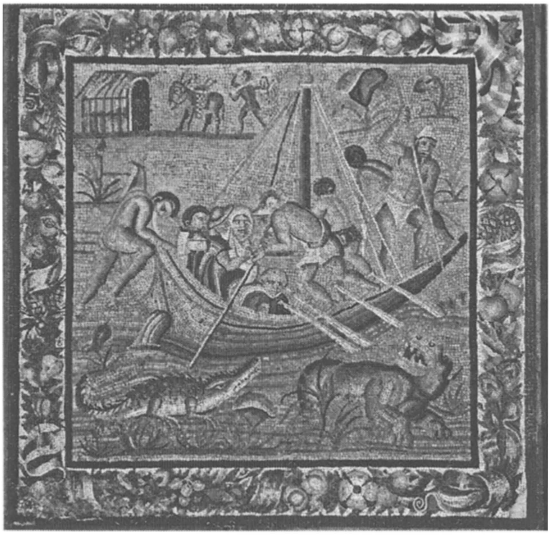
1.3 *Other provinces*

1.3.1 *Samnium (IV)*

079 Tivoli (Tibur)

a. Mosaic.
b. Probably from the so-called villa di Cassio.
c. The emblema measures 0.66 x 0.67; large parts of the mosaic have been restored.
d. National Museum of Wales, Cardiff, 32.93.
e. 150-200 AD.

In the centre of the picture a sailing boat has hit a rock. In the vessel four passengers can be distinguished: a young man and woman, a man with a cloak and a box hanging over his shoulder, and another man looking at a crocodile and a hostile hippopotamus in the water. The crew of the ship tries to get the vessel sailing again and to keep the animals in the water at a safe distance. In the background one can see the shore where a man with a bucket over his shoulder herds a donkey in the direction of a wooden or reed structure.



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For a detailed description and interpretation see Whitehouse.

As regards composition, the mosaic emblema from Tivoli strongly resembles the two Augustan emblemata from Pompeii (Casa di Paquius Proculus and Casa del Menandro, cf. cat. nos 034 and 037), which however show dwarves instead of real people. By depicting real people this scene becomes more realistic but also more dramatic: it looks as if an episode of a story is depicted. As a possible source, Whitehouse suggests a text like Heliodorus' *Aethiopica* and concludes that a new dramatic scene was depicted in the form of a traditional Nilotic landscape. This observation is correct and can perhaps be explained further. The artist was supposed to visualise a literary source narrating the running aground of a vessel on the Nile. He did this with the aid of the most frequently occurring images of Egypt he knew: Nilotic landscapes. Maybe the man and the donkey are walking in the direction of a granary on the Nile; a typical feature of the period of the flood[177]. Based on a mention of the find of a Nile mosaic in the report by the excavator Domenico de Angelis, it seems almost certain that this emblema came from the so-called villa di Cassio. The mosaic was found in 1775, turned up in the antique trade in the following years and finally ended up in Wales.

The villa di Cassio was situated in the foothills of the Monte Ripoli, just outside the centre of ancient Tivoli. Further excavations yielded five granite statues of Pharaonic type and a statue of a crocodile. The villa therefore had a large number of exotic decorative elements[178].

H. Whitehouse, Shipwreck on the Nile: A Greek Novel on a 'Lost' Roman mosaic?, *AJA* 89 (1985) 129-134.

1.3.2 *Picenum (V)*

080 Ancona

a. Painting.
b. House.
c. The painting decorated the socle of a nymphaeum wall.
d. Museo, Ancona.
e. Around 30 BC.

A simple marsh scene with ducks is depicted.

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[177] Cf. *Versluys 2000*, 248-249 with n. 53 and Ch. III 4.4.5.

[178] The five statues, discovered in 1799, show a young god with a solar disc, and are now in the MV (Museo Gregoriano Egizio, 22795/96/97, 22810/11). Cf. J. Yoyotte, P. Chuvin, Le Zeus Casios de Péluse à Tivoli. Une hypothèse, *BIFAO* 88 (1988) 165-180, with previous literature.

Little more is known about the context of the painting in Ancona than that it concerns a house in the town. The presence of a nymphaeum points to a certain prosperity of the owners.

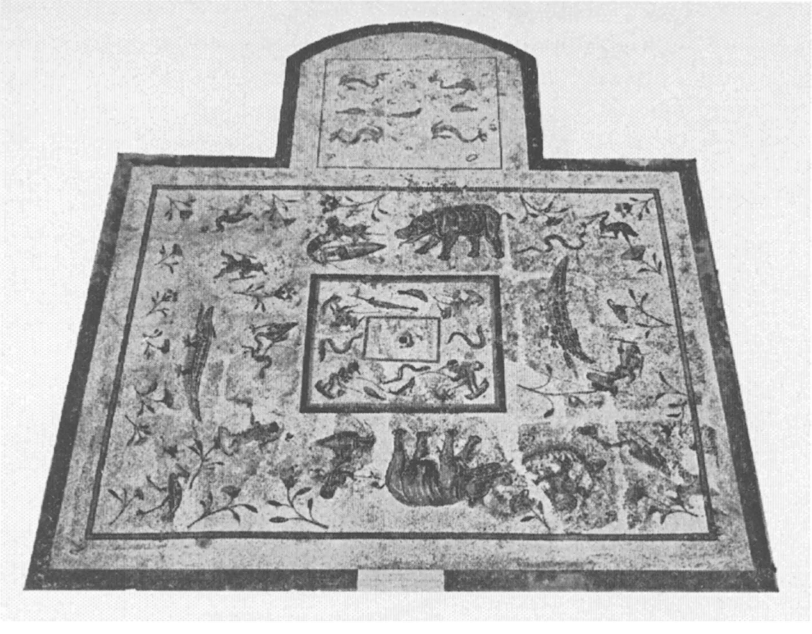
EAA, supplement (1970) opposite 56; *Meyboom 1995*, V n. 16; *Rauch 1999*, 246.

1.3.3 *Umbria (VI)*

081 Collemancio (Urbinum Hortense)

a. Mosaic.
b. Unknown.
c. The mosaic covers an area of 62 m^2. An extension in the form of an apse is placed at the top. In the middle of the central part lies a stone with a hole for draining the water. The central part itself is decorated with fishing dwarves. The Nilotic landscape is depicted on the four sides surrounding the central part.
d. MNR, Rome, 124698.
e. 100-200 AD.

In the upper part the water landscape is indicated by large lotus plants. One can distinguish a dwarf who defends himself against a hippo-



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potamus in a peculiar way: he stands on an amphora to which he has attached a cloth as a sail and he fires his semen at the hippopotamus. Like all pygmies in the picture, he is depicted caricaturally with a large phallus. On the right a hostile encounter between a snake and an ibis is depicted. On the right side a crocodile is turning toward a pygmy who safely stands on a petal and is holding two sticks in both hands. The lower side shows a hippopotamus being attacked by two dwarves. One of these is standing on an amphora and stabs the animal with a stick. In front of the hippopotamus sails another pygmy in a boat. On the left a walking bird grabs a small reptile. On the left side a crocodile is hunted by two dwarves. Behind the animal stands a pygmy with a club in his hands on a petal. In front of the crocodile one can distinguish a dwarf with sticks in his hands who runs away. On either side of this scene birds grabbing reptiles can be seen.

It has long been assumed that the black-and-white mosaic decorated the floor of a bath building. The form, however, is very similar to the Nile mosaic from Palestrina, suggesting that the mosaic decorated the floor of a nymphaeum. In that case the picture would be clearly visible and the impression of the Nilotic landscape would have been enhanced by the small layer of water flowing over it.

Van Essen 1954, 82 ff.; *Helbig*(4) no. 2128; *Cèbe 1966*, 349; *LIMC* sv. pygmaioi 52b; *Cappel 1994*, sv. M14.

1.3.4 *Etruria (VII)*

082 Santa Severa (Pyrgi)

a. Mosaic.
b. Villa ‘in località Prato Rotatore’.
c. The mosaic measures 2.41 x 2.82. The central part is framed by a surrounding frieze showing a Nilotic landscape.
d. Collezione Albertini, Torre in Pietra—Rome.
e. 100-200 AD.

At the top a dwarf holding two sticks in both hands is being attacked by a hippopotamus. Another dwarf is carrying a shield and raises a stone in his right hand to defend himself against a crocodile. As in the whole frieze, flowers and plants are placed between the figures. On the right side a naked pygmy grabs a crane by its beak and hits the bird with a stone. Another dwarf is also fighting a crane. He holds a stick and shield in his hands. Both dwarves are wearing a round hat. The lower side shows a naked dwarf killing a crane, while another naked pygmy holds a stick with both hands. Also a large lotus plant is depicted with a frog next to it. On the left side a dwarf leads a mule carrying two amphorae. In front of the mule stands a pygmy who is feeding the animal or giving it something to drink.

The central emblema of the mosaic shows a victorious fighter who, as the inscription testifies, is called *neilodorus*. It is quite conceivable that this name has determined the choice of the subject of the surrounding frieze.

The mosaic is one of the few remains of a Roman villa from the area around Santa Severa.

BdI (1843) 74; *Reinach 1922*, 278, 6; *LIMC* sv. pygmaioi 52c; *Donderer 1989*, 148-149 sv. no. C32 (with all previous literature); *Cappel 1994*, sv. M13.

1.3.5 *Venetia et Histria (X)*

083 Brescia (Brixia)

a. Mosaic.
b. Villa on the corner of the present Via S. Rocchino/Via Graziola, triclinium.
c. The floor of the room is decorated with a large geometric mosaic in which an emblema with Nilotic motifs forms the central part. The four corners of the emblema are decorated with dolphins and tridents. The figurative scenes in between form a surrounding frieze but are, however, largely lost.
d. Museo Romano, Brescia.
e. 150-175 AD.

The north side shows an old man standing in front of the open doors of a building on a podium. To the right the prow of a boat can be recognised. On the east side the tail of a crocodile has been preserved. Behind the animal stands a pygmy with a shield and club in his hands. The south side shows a crocodile that turns its head in the direction of a ship. Of the west side only a duck has been preserved.

On the corner of Via S. Rocchino/Via Graziolo in Brescia parts of a villa suburbana were unearthed in 1960/61. The large geometric mosaic in room h, showing an emblema with Nilotic motifs, belongs to the third construction phase which can be dated to the third quarter of the second century AD. The friezes with a Nilotic character are facing inward where however nothing is depicted. Donderer suggests that perhaps a water basin was placed there, with which the Nilotic elements would fit in well thematically.

M. Mirabelli Roberti, Archeologia ed arte di Brescia romana, *Storia di Brescia* I (1963) 285-288; M. Donderer, *Die Chronologie der römischen Mosaiken in Venetien und Istrien bis zur Zeit der Antoninen* (1986) 111-112 sv. no. 36 (with previous literature).

084 Brescia (Brixia)

a. Painting.
b. Domus 'nell'orto di S. Giulia', room r (probably a triclinium).
c. The simple Nilotic scenes are located above the socle of the wall.
d. Museo Romano, Brescia.
e. 0-100 AD.

Waterscapes with ducks and fishes can be distinguished. Also a bridge is still visible.

The Roman domus preserved in the garden of the S. Giulia monastry has only been partly excavated and the plan therefore remains incomplete. In the eastern part of the mansion there is a room (r) on the peristyle of which the decoration has been relatively well preserved. The room was named the 'sala di Bacco' by the excavators because of the Dionysian themes depicted in the decoration. The floor was decorated with an emblema showing Dionysos resting on a couch with a rhyton in his hand while garlands are hanging above his head and a panther is resting at his feet. The four walls of the room were painted with a socle showing waterplants. In panels between them one can see theatre masks and birds. The remainder of the wall shows thin ornament lines, sometimes elaborated in the form of Egyptian caryatids, which divide the wall into two or three parts with large central panels. These panels, insofar as they have been preserved, are painted with water scenes showing fishes and other marine animals, waterscapes, and a religious landscape in which Priapus is the key figure. One of the walls shows a Nilotic scene above the socle. This makes it likely that also the waterscapes on the panels should be interpreted as Nilotic.

Cappel 1994 also mentions a nymphaeum (p) decorated with a picture showing pygmies fighting hippopotami.

M. Mirabella Roberti, Gli ultimi dieci anni di scavi romani a Brescia, in: *Atti del Convegno internazionale per il XIX centenario della dedicazione del 'Capitolium' e per il 150 anniversario della sua scoperta* II (1973) 5-20, 12-17; A. Frova, Pittura romana nella Venetia et Histria, in: *Aquileia nella 'Venetia et Histria'* (1986) 203-228, 223; *Cappel 1994*, sv..

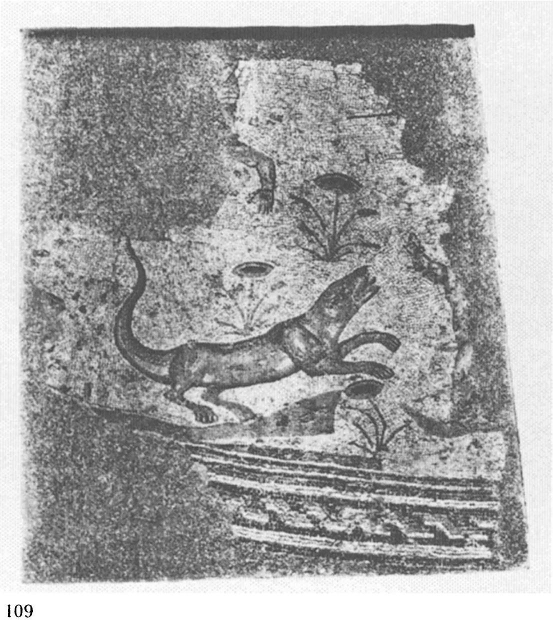
2 *North Africa*

2.1 *Numidia*

2.1.1 *Timgad*

085 Timgad (Thamugadi)

a. Mosaic.
b. Public thermae (so-called southern baths), latrine.
c. Only a fragment of the figurative part of the mosaic has been preserved, together with a large part of the surrounding geometric frieze.
d. Museum, Timgad, 37.
e. Around 250 AD.



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In the centre of the picture stands a large reptile (probably a crocodile) amid lotus flowers. On the right the hand of a dwarf is still visible.

The southern thermae, built in the second century AD, is a very large complex with a surface area of approximately 2000 m^2. In AD 198 and in the third century AD large restorations took place. The Nilotic fragment dates from this latter phase.

S. Gsell, *Les monuments antiques de l'Algérie* I (1901) 202; *Foucher 1965*, 141; S. Germain, *Les mosaïques de Timgad. Étude descriptive et analytique* (1969) 134 sv. no. 205 (with previous literature); *Cappel 1994*, sv. M24.

2.2 *Africa Proconsularis*

2.2.1 *El Alia*

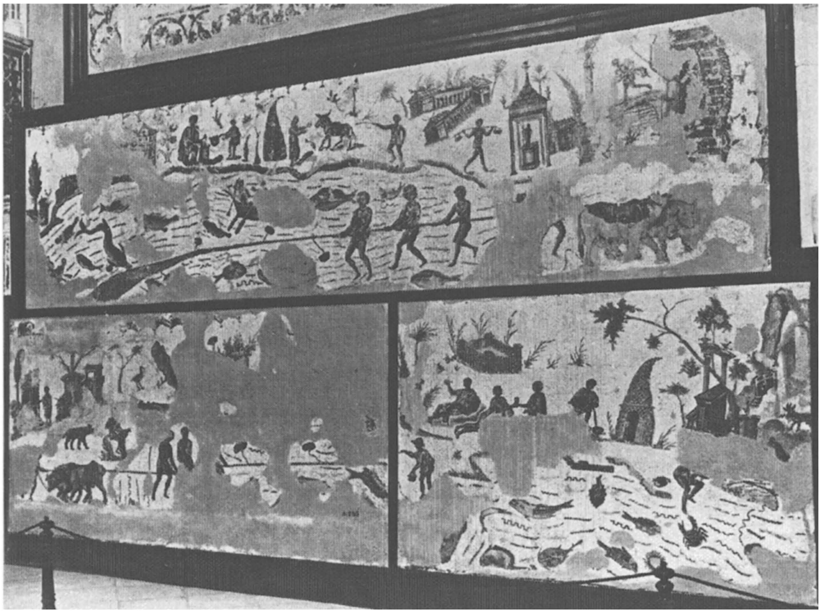
086 El Alia

a. Mosaic.
b. Villa.
c. Black and white floor decoration of two different rooms (I and II) of the same villa. Three fragments from room I are now in the Bardo Museum, Tunis and have only been fragmentarily preserved. Many parts were filled in with (antique) restorations showing fishes and undulating lines indicating the water. All fragments from room II were moved to the museum in Sousse. It seems that the present reconstruction of the fragments there is not always correct. Some antique restorations, which can be dated at the end of the Severan era, are visible as well as some modern alterations.
d. Bardo Museum, Tunis, A 295 and Museum, Sousse, 10.438.
e. 100-125 AD.

A (room I, fragment 1): in the upper part of the picture a river bank is depicted; the right half of this section seems to be authentic. One can distinguish a building at the water's edge with two people in front. After a thatched hut with a typical shape follow two people trying to catch a donkey. In the background stands a building with two porticoes with a wood depicted behind it. One can also see a dark person with a carrying stick over his shoulder walking in the direction of an aedicula where a small statue stands on a large base. Behind the aedicula some other small buildings are visible, as well as a column with a statue on top. Another section shows a man with a sack over his shoulder crossing a bridge.

B (room I, fragment 2): the part of the picture showing the river bank is almost totally lost. On the left one still can see a man between some buildings; one of the buildings surrounds a tree. Near the river a dog is walking towards a man who is sitting on a rock. On the right a waterbird stands next to a small tree.

C (room I, fragment 3): on the river bank a palm tree is depicted, next to a building with four towers connected by walls amid vegetation. In front of the building two reclining men get something to drink from a woman. On the right a man is pouring wine in a drinking cup next to a cane hut. Further to the right a tree sanctuary is visible. On the far left a man with a round hat is standing, holding a basket in his left hand.



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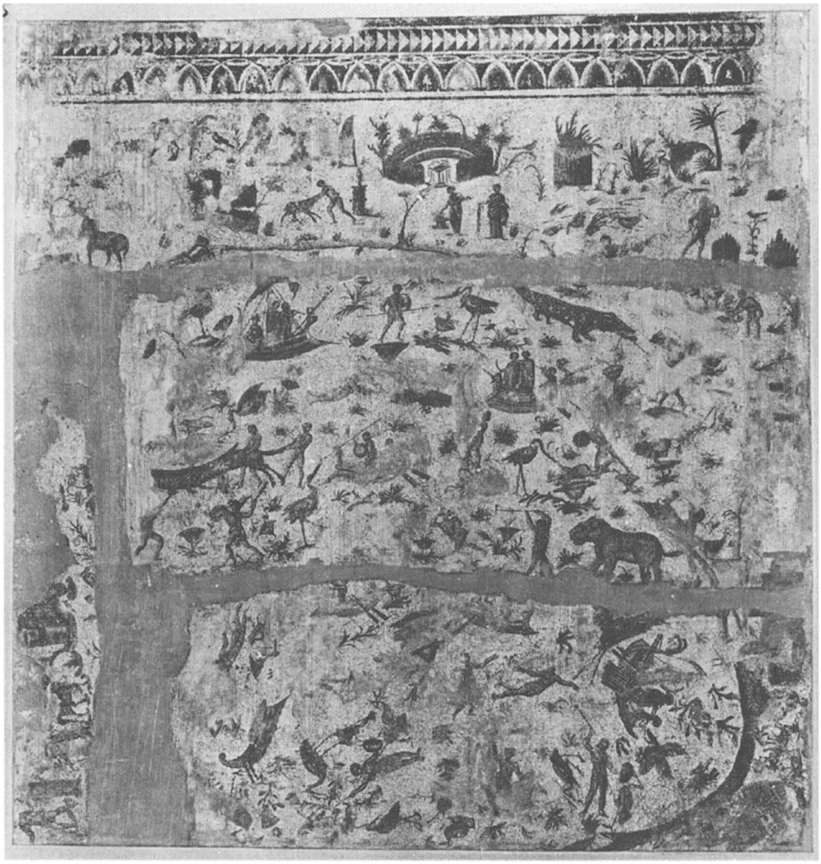
D (room II): in the centre of the mosaic a marsh is depicted, framed by a strip of land on all sides where all kinds of activities are taking place: people are offering, resting, drinking, etc. Also a palm tree is visible, as well as lots of smaller vegetation, some wooden huts, two towers, a few horses and a scene with a man leading a goat in the direction of an altar with the statue of an ityphallic Priapus. In the marsh itself many people and animals can be distinguished among the waterplants. The main theme is men hunting Nilotic animals, especially birds. Also some boats are depicted. In one of these boats a man is playing a double oboe, while a woman is holding a torch and another man drops something in the water. Perhaps a ritual for the Nile god is depicted here. Also a crocodile devouring a donkey is visible.



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The Nile mosaic from El Alia which is now in the Bardo Museum in Tunis (room I), consists of three parts which have been assembled in one modern panel. Note that the original placing of the two lower fragments (nos. 2 and 3) was switched. The fragments were discovered in 1898. The Nile mosaic from El-Alia which is now in Sousse (room II), "occupait tout le sol d'un salon d'apparat, au rez-de-chaussée d'un pavillon rectangulaire qui formait l'aile gauche d'une grande villa romaine", according to the authors of the first catalogue of the museum[179]. It was probably discovered during excavations in 1897. The mosaic was most damaged near the entrance to the room, as well as on the side facing the sea. Important restorations were therefore already executed in Antiquity.

Both mosaics are closely related in their theme, style and execution and it is therefore not surprising that they derive from the same villa. As they were not found in the same year and are now part of different museum collections, their origin from the same context is often not noted. Both mosaics decorated an oecus of a huge villa on the seashore, the meagre remains of which were examined by the Direction des Antiquités under the direction of M.P. Gauckler and M. Pradère. The villa had a large number of rooms, amongst them a long gallery with a view on the sea, two atria, alae and two oeci of 6 x 6 m, the floors of which were decorated with the large Nile mosaics[180].

Gauckler 1910, sv. no. 92 and 93; *Foucher 1965*, 138-140; *Dunbabin 1979*, 20, 48, 110; *LIMC* sv. pygmaioi 53a; *Cappel 1994*, sv. U5; *Meyboom 1995*, IV n. 198.

2.2.2 *El Djem*

087 El Djem (Thysdrus)

a. Mosaic.
b. House in city quarter Bir Zid.
c. A fragment (about 2 x 3, including the frame) of a large floor mosaic.
d. Museum, El Djem, A 16.
e. 200-225 AD.

The river is indicated schematically by small black lines, as if the water is flowing over the picture. Everywhere lotuses are visible, depicted in detail, as well as other waterplants. Also six large waterbirds and five ducks can be distinguished, some of which are fighting dwarves. Three dwarves have been preserved. A dwarf in the middle of the fragment has hit a waterbird; another dwarf, his head is lost, attacks a duck with a spear. A third dwarf stands in a boat; he is wearing a pointed cap, holds a stick in his left hand and stretches out his right hand. In the river the leg of what was probably another dwarf is still visible. On the far left side of the picture stands a woman. Her head is lost; she is wearing a kind of garland over her shoulders.

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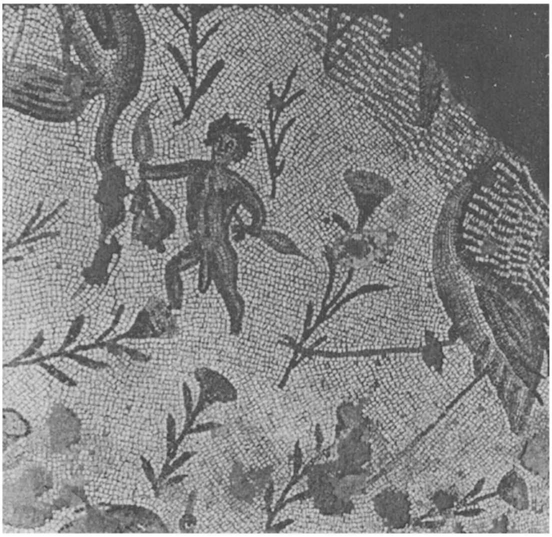
[179] P. Gauckler, E. Gouvet, G. Hannezo, *Musée de Sousse (Musées et collections archéologiques de l'Algérie et de la Tunisie)* (1902) 25.

[180] *Gauckler 1910*, 38-41 sv. 91 (description of the remains of the villa); 92 ("mêmes fouilles: oecus, grand tableau pittoresque, 6m x 6m, trois fragments, les mieux conservés ont été transportés au Musée du Bardo et réunis dans un même tableau. Un quatrième, des poissons, appartient à M. Demeure"); 93 ("mêmes fouilles: autre oecus, grand tableau pittoresque, 6m20 x 6m20, transporté au musée municipal de Sousse, sauf un fragment du pourtour qui est conservée au Bardo") and 94 ("entre les ruïnes de la précédente villa et le bord de la mer, restes très effacés d'un baptistère ou d'une piscine. En place. Vue par nous en 1899").



112

Foucher assumes that the house was destroyed in the first half of the third century AD[181].

L. Foucher, *Découvertes archéologiques à Thysdrus en 1960* (1961) 12; *Foucher 1965*, 141; *Dunbabin 1978*, 87, 258; *LIMC* sv. pygmaioi 53[e;] *Cappel 1994*, sv. M23.

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[181] L. Foucher, *La maison de la procession dionysiaque à El Jem* (1963) 108. On page 16-17 a map of El Djem is reproduced on which the findspot of the fragment is indicated.

2.2.3 *Sousse*

088 Sousse (Hadrumetum)

a. Mosaic.
b. City quarter B 6.
c. The mosaic was discovered by the archaeologist Doublet at the end of the 19th century; only his description has been preserved. The mosaic might have decorated a hypogaeum.
d. Lost.
e. 200-400 AD.

"Grande mosaïque nilotique: têtes de canards et d'outardes, corps de pygmées ou de génies nus, plantes et roseaux".

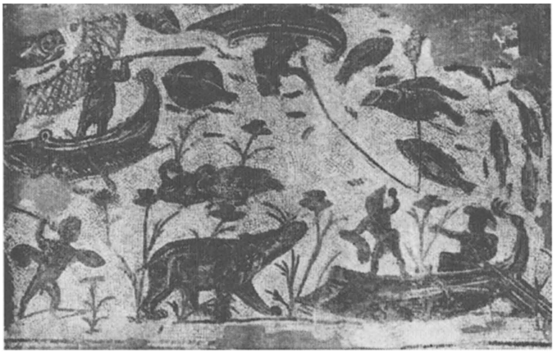
The description of the mosaic recalls the fragment from El Djem (cat. no. 087).

Gauckler 1910, sv. no. 193; *Foucher 1960,* 79 sv. no. 57.176.

089 Sousse (Hadrumetum)

a. Mosaic.
b. House in city quarter D 3, triclinium.
c. Only three parts preserved: a horizontal part (A, partly preserved: 1.14 x 1.46) shows the banks of the Nile. The river and marshes were depicted in the vertical part of which only the upper section (B, 1.45 x 2.15) and another small fragment (C, 0.62 x 0.89) have been preserved.
d. Bardo Museum, Tunis, A2 (A); Museum, Sousse, 10.457 (B); Bardo Museum, Tunis, A3 (C).
e. Around 250 AD.

A: hunting animals and fishermen pulling a net can be distinguished. The preserved fragment also shows a wild boar being attacked by a dog. In the background a jumping hare is depicted.
B: the marshes are indicated by lotuses, papyrus plants, waterbirds and fishes. Two pygmies, both wearing lotus leaves as hats, sail in a boat with a high, curved stern and attack a hippopotamus. One of them tends the rudder while the other one raises his right hand to throw something at the animal. Behind the hippopotamus a third dwarf with a harpoon and a shield is depicted. Above this scene stands a fisherman in a boat at a net. From two other points of view, dwarves fishing in boats were visible as well as (now lost) pygmies attacking large birds and a crocodile.



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C: a pygmy carrying a stick and a captured duck.

The context of the Nilotic mosaic from Sousse, city quarter D 3, can be deduced from the specific form and the different points of view: it decorated the floor of a triclinium. The horizontal part (A) formed the entrance to the room, the couches were placed around the vertical part. The fragments of the mosaic were found during excavations of remains of a Roman house in 1883. Doublet published a drawing of the floor in situ in 1892. Different fragments disappeared to various museums after the excavation[182].

A. Doublet, *RA* (1892) II, 117 ff.; *Gauckler 1910*, sv. no. 178; *Foucher 1952*, 29-30; *Foucher 1960*, 9-11 sv. no. 57.027 (with all previous literature); L. Foucher, *Hadrumetum* (1964) 240; *Foucher 1965*, 141; *Dunbabin 1979*, 269; *Rom in Karthago*, 31 sv. no. 10a; *Cappel 1994*, sv. M22.

090 Sousse (Hadrumetum)

a. Mosaic.
b. City quarter D 4.
c. The fragment was found in 1928; at that time already in a very bad condition.
d. Lost.
e. 200-400 AD.

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[182] Cf. the article by Doublet, whose drawing is reproduced in almost all later publications.

Dwarves with hats, spears and shields were depicted amid Nilotic flowers.

Bulletin Archéologique du Comité des Travaux Historiques (1928-1929) 46; *Foucher 1960*, 26 sv. 57.055.

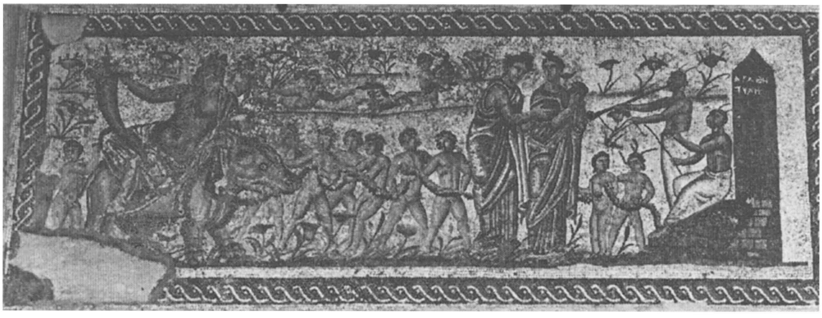
2.3 *Africa Tripolitania*

2.3.1 *Lepcis Magna*

091 Lepcis Magna

a. Mosaic.
b. Villa del Nilo, baths, tepidarium.
c. In the tepidarium four oblong mosaic panels were found. One of these (1.18 x 3.22) shows an allegory of the Nile god. The other three show a realistic fishing scene, the worshipping of Pegasos by the nymphs and a water scene with erotes fishing, sailing amphorai, etc.
d. Archaeological Museum, Tripoli.
e. 250-300 AD.

The river with waterplants and two putti chasing ducks is visible in the background. In the foreground of the picture the Nile god comes riding along on a hippopotamus. He is depicted as an older man with a naked breast and holding up a cornucopiae in his right hand. The hippopotamus is guided by a group of putti holding a garland. In total twelve putti are depicted. Between them one can see two women, often interpreted as nymphs, who seem to hold musical instruments. On the far right a small monument, inscribed *agathe tyche*, is erected. Two musicians are standing next to it, one of whom is playing some kind of long trumpet from which a rope is hanging that they both are holding with their hands.



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Aurigemma interprets the small monument as a Nilometer and it does indeed seem likely that a Nile marker is indicated. Foucher thinks the two women to be the nymphs Memphis and Anchirhoe and the two musicians cultic servants; Klementa follows these suggestions. A similar picture of the Nile god accompanied by putti and nymphs can be found on a base from Rome (cat. no. 012).

The Villa del Nilo, named after the panel, is located east of Lepcis Magna, roughly between the harbour and the amphitheatre, close by the sea. The first discoveries were made in 1916 when a long corridor was found with a floor completely decorated with geometric mosaics. The excavations were continued in 1930 when remains of the villa's bath complex were exposed, including the four mosaic panels decorating the floor of the tepidarium. This is located between two swimming pools, in a large open space which is interpreted by the excavators as a palaestra. In his publication on the excavation Guidi concluded that the theme of water, in all its aspects, is the focal point in the four panels. Remarkable is that the water scene with erotes contains a number of typical Nilotic elements: one eros is sailing an amphora to which he has attached a sail; two others have a carrying pole with baskets on their shoulders. The latter was probably originally meant to represent the transportation of grain to Alexandria and the exertions this involved for the population (cf. Ch. III 4.4.5). On the right side of the representation a quay is depicted with large ships to which all erotes are hurrying. It could therefore be contemplated whether it was meant here to represent allegorically the period just after the beginning of the flood and a specific activity of the population in that period. In another room two emblemata were found, showing a wild boar hunt in an environment abundant in water as well as a lion hunt.

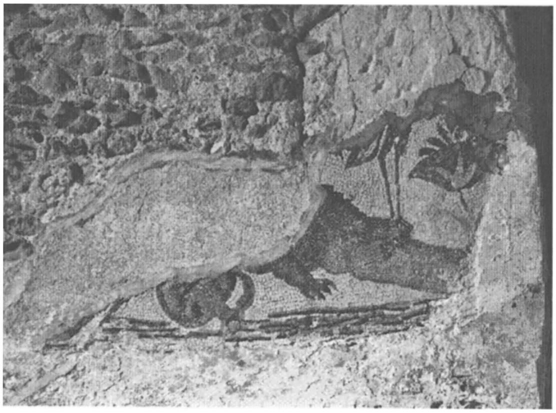
G. Guidi, La villa del Nilo, *Africa Italiana* 5 (1933) 1-56; *Aurigemma 1960*, 48; A. Hermann, Die Ankunft des Nils, *ZÄS* 85 (1960) 35-42; *Foucher 1965*, 137-138; *Dunbabin 1979*, 126, 264; *Klementa 1993*, 40 sv. 36; *Meyboom 1995*, III n. 77, 78; *Muth 1998*, 371-372 sv. A19 (with all previous literature).

092 Lepcis Magna

a. Mosaic.
b. Public baths (so-called hunting baths), frigidarium.
c. The original mosaic decoration of the south side of the eastern

semi-dome in the frigidarium has been fragmentarily preserved. Among other themes, a Nilotic scene can be reconstructed.
d. In situ.
e. 180-200 AD.

One fragment shows waterplants, a bird and an unidentifiable animal. Another part of the scene shows the front part of a crocodile, as well as a crane, a large lotus flower and a jar from which water is flowing.



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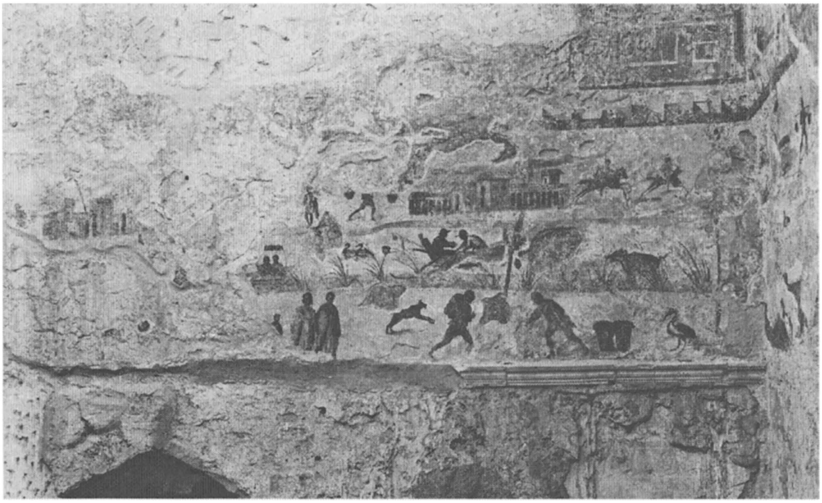
For a description of the context see cat. no. 093.

J.B. Ward Perkins, J.M.C.Toynbee, The Hunting Baths at Lepcis Magna, *Archaeologia* 93 (1949) 165-195, 179-180; G. Pesce, La decorazione del frigidario delle piccole terme di Leptis, *BdA* 34 (1949) 46-50.

093 Lepcis Magna

a. Painting.
b. Public baths (so-called hunting baths), plunge.
c. The north plunge of the frigidarium was redecorated with a painted Nilotic frieze that probably extended over all four walls. On the east and south walls fragments have been preserved.
d. In situ.
e. Around 250 AD.

The fragment on the extreme right of the east wall shows a landscape divided, as it were, into three tiers. In the foreground of the



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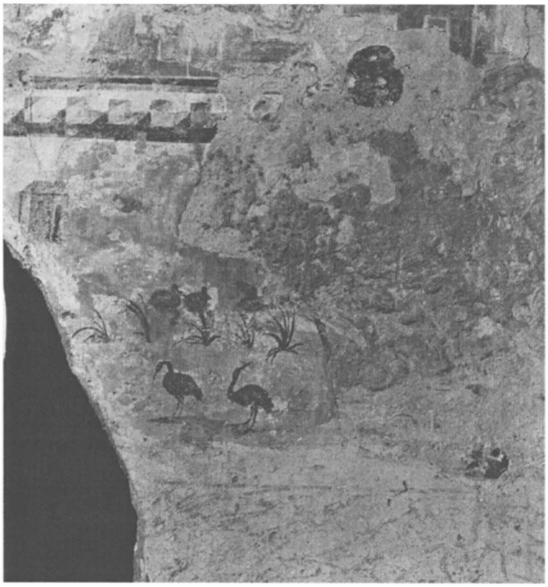
lower register some people are strolling, while others are busy collecting fruits. Also an ibis and a dog are depicted. The river is indicated by its surrounding marshes with waterplants, a large lotus flower and a palm tree. In the water one can distinguish ducks and people boating. In the background building complexes are depicted with people carrying baskets and horsemen next to it. The scene continued on the extreme left side of the south wall. In the foreground an ibis is depicted while a duck is swimming in the river. On the shore a man with a carrying stick over his shoulder is walking in the background. After an arch the scene continued on the right side of the south wall. Two ibises, a few ducks amid waterplants and a building in the background have been preserved.

The Terme dei Cacciatori, a bath complex west of Lepcis Magna, just outside the 4th century city walls at approximately 100 metres from the sea, has been preserved relatively well. Excavations took place in 1932/33 under Guidi. The bath building was constructed towards the end of the second century AD, but was enlarged and extended in the third century AD. The most important areas are a frigidarium, two octagonal tepidaria and a large hall with painted panels of animal skins and hunters, which gave the baths their name. It has been suggested that the bath complex belonged to a guild of hunters, because of the hunters and their hunt trophies which are depicted in a central hall; this can however not be stated with certainty. The frigidarium knew three decoration phases. In the first



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phase the vaults of the absidial basins were covered with mosaics. Remains of these have been preserved and show a nymph/maenade, a sea god and a Nile landscape with, amongst other things, a crocodile and an ibis. In the second phase everything was covered with stucco that was painted with decorative patterns. Later again, the lower part of the wall was covered with marble, while the upper part was painted with figurative scenes, amongst them a leopard hunt and a lion hunt. The Nile landscape in the adjacent plunge probably also belonged to this last decoration phase[183].

J.B. Ward Perkins, J.M.C. Toynbee, The Hunting Baths at Lepcis Magna, *Archaeologia* 93 (1949) 165-195, 182-184; *Aurigemma 1962*, 84-87; V. Caffarelli, G. Caputo, *Leptis Magna* (1963) fig. 178; *Cappel 1994*, sv. W40.

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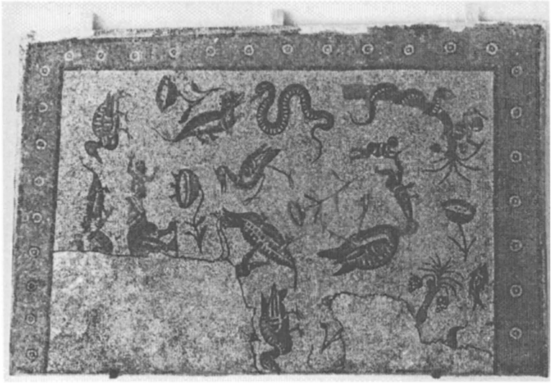
[183] Cf. D.E.L. Haynes, *An archaeological and historical guide to the pre-Islamic antiquities of Tripolitania* (1959) 95-97; A. Di Vita et. al., *La Libye antique. Cités perdues de l'Empire romain* (1998) illustrations on 102-105, among them a col. pl. of the painted Nile scene, and, on the chronology, the sv. no. indicated article by Ward-Perkins and Toynbee. For Tripolitania see now D.J. Mattingly, *Tripolitania* (1995). Fig 6:2 shows the position of the thermae to the ancient city; see 116-122 for Lepcis in general.

2.3.2 *Uadi ez Zgaia*

094 Uadi ez Zgaia

a. Mosaic.
b. Public baths.
c. The originally quite large Nilotic scene has only been partly preserved; the existing fragment originally extended further to the right. The missing parts were already restored in Antiquity with simple white tesserae.
d. Archaeological Museum, Tripoli.
e. 200-400 AD.

The battle between pygmies, all depicted in black, and Nilotic animals is rendered in a comic manner. One scene shows a snake that has coiled itself around the trunk of a palm tree to seize a dwarf. Another scene depicts a large bird that has almost eaten a dwarf, while a companion tries to pull him out. Also a pygmy riding a crocodile and a dwarf that is being devoured by a hippopotamus can be distinguished, as well as a crocodile attacking a boat. Everywhere between these scenes, lotuses, ducks, birds and other Nilotic vegetation and animals are depicted.



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The Nilotic scene from Uadi ez Zgaia originates from a thermae building, the remains of which were discovered in 1924. A caldarium, frigidarium and apodyterium can be identified with certainty. Various mosaics have been recovered from the building, as well as remains of paintings. As pendant to the Nilotic mosaic, a mosaic showing a fish scene was installed. This has no Nilotic character but does show a number of typical Nilotic elements, such as fishermen depicted as dwarves, two of which seem to be sailing a papyrus canoe. Moreover, a dwarf on the forward deck of another boat is rendered in black, as are all the dwarves in the Nilotic mosaic.

R. Bartoccini, Rinvenimenti vari di interesse archeologico in Tripolitania (1920-1925), *Africa Italiana* I (1927) 213-248, 241-248; P. Romanelli, Di alcuni nuovi mosaici tripolitani, *RendPontAc* ser. 3, VI (1930) 85-96; *Aurigemma 1960*, 43-45; *Foucher 1965*, 141; *Dunbabin 1979*, 276; *LIMC* sv. pygmaioi 53-54; *Cappel 1994*, sv. M25.

2.3.3 *Zliten*

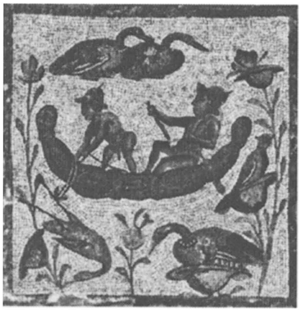
095 Zliten

a. Mosaics.
b. Villa di Dar Buc Ammèra, living quarter and nymphaeum.
c. A large mosaic in the villa showed the personifications of the four seasons. On either side of the mosaic two vertical bands were placed, each consisiting of three emblemata. Both lower emblemata are Nilotic scenes. Also the floor of a nymphaeum in the villa was decorated with a Nilotic scene.
d. Archaeological Museum, Tripoli, 22 and in situ.
e. 100-300 AD.

A (emblema left): two dwarves are rowing a papyrus canoe. The pygmy in the back is holding the oars, while his companion throws out the anchor in the direction of a waterbird. They are both naked, apart from the lotus flower they are using as a hat. In the water one can see large lotuses and three swimming ducks.

B (emblema right): two naked dwarves, again wearing lotus flowers as hats, are defending themselves in an obscene manner against a duck and a stork. Large lotuses, other plants and some birds are depicted to indicate the setting.

C (nymphaeum): the fragment shows birds and fishes fighting with pygmies between large lotuses and other waterplants.



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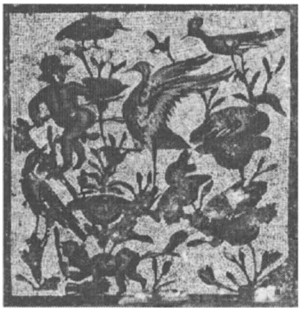
Aurigemma, who published the mosaics of the villa, dated them in the Flavian period. This has been queried as well as defended from different sides. Dunbabin gives an overview of the different hypotheses,



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ranging from Flavian to the beginning of the 4th century AD. She concludes that different phases have to be distinguished. The first phase probably dated to the end of the first century AD. The Seasons mosaic, however, was made in the second century AD. In the third century AD restorations were undertaken and some small new mosaics were added, such as the Nile mosaic in the nymphaeum.

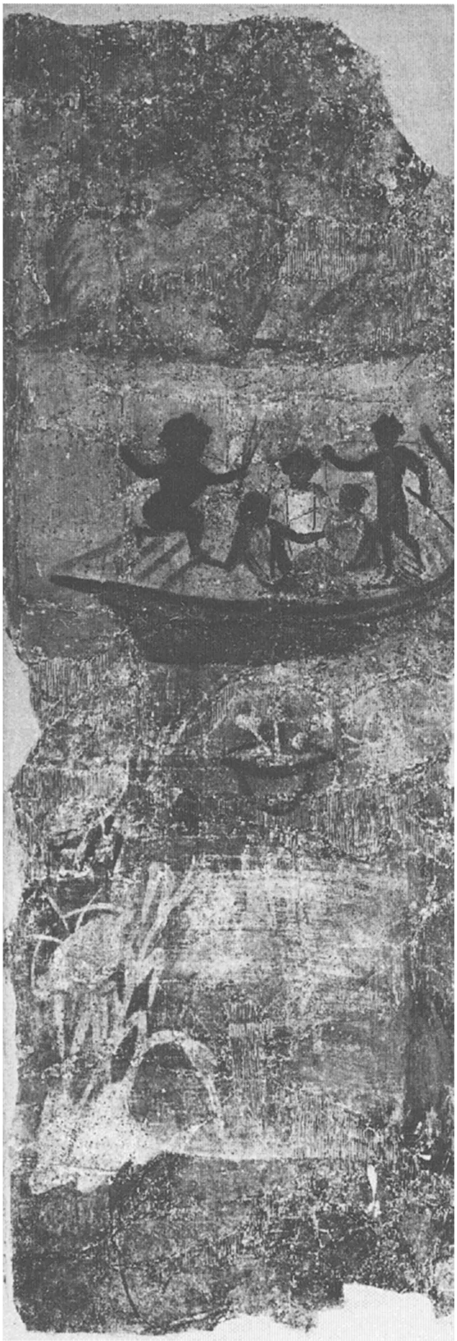
For a description of the context see cat. no. 096.

S. Aurigemma, *I mosaici di Zliten* (1926) 119 ff.; *Aurigemma 1960*, 55-62; L. Foucher, Sur les mosaïques de Zliten, *Libya Antiqua* I (1964) 9-20 (with further previous literature); *Foucher 1965*, 141; *Dunbabin 1978*, 17 ff., 235-237 ('appendix 1: the date of the Zliten mosaics'); *LIMC* sv. pygmaioi 53; *Cappel 1994*, sv. M20 and M21.

096 Zliten

a. Painting.
b. Villa di Dar Buc Ammèra, room U and criptoportico.
c. Two fragments of wall painting from room U (respectively 1.51 x 0.53 and 1.08 x 0.8), some fragments from the criptoportico and a fragment without context.
d. Archaeological Museum, Tripoli.
e. Around 100 AD.

A (room U): five dwarves are sailing a boat with a high stern. One of the dwarves is holding two sticks in both hands. In the background large waterplants are indicated in outline, while in the foreground a long-legged waterbird is walking between vegetation. A large lotus flower is clearly visible.
B (room U): a boat with four people sails the river amid waterplants and flowers. In the foreground a dwarf is depicted frontally. He is holding a spear in his hands and is fighting a heron in front of him.
C (cryptoporticus): two ducks facing each other are depicted between lotus flowers.
D (cryptoporticus): some fragments of cranes have been preserved.
E (fragment with no clear context): two dancing, ityphallic putti are indicated.



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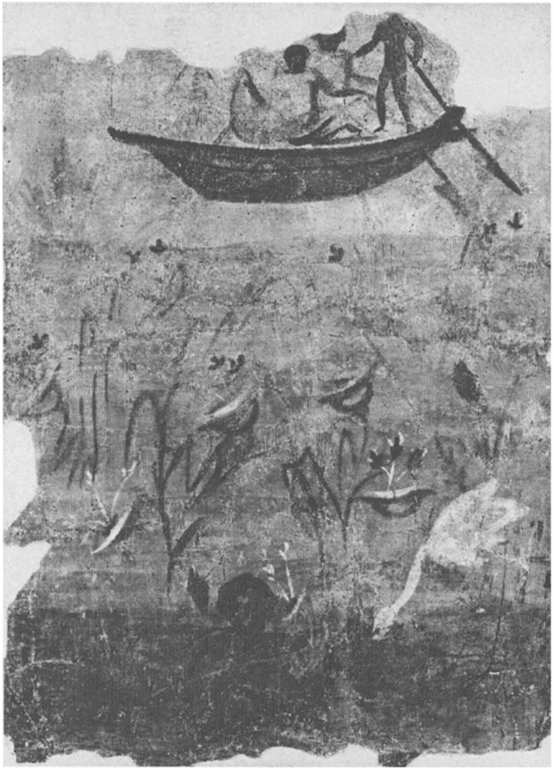

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The villa in the area of Dar Buc Ammèra near Zliten is one of the best preserved examples of the many luxurious villae on the North African mediterranean coast. Excavations took place in 1913-14 and at the end of the 1930's. The villa was built into a hillside and the plan of the complex was adapted to this natural environment. The complex consists of three parts: the living quarters, situated between two long criptoporticoes, a peristyle with surrounding rooms, and a bath complex. The well-known mosaic showing scenes from the amphitheatre was found in the living quarters, as was, in a different room, the mosaic with the personification of the four seasons with a Nilotic emblema on either side (cat. no. 095 A and B). The scene with two ducks amid lotuses originates from the criptoporticus, as do fragments showing cranes. It is quite conceivable that they were part of a frieze which decorated the upper zone of the wall. The fragments with dancing putti originate from a different room of this part of the villa, as are the elongated panels showing Nilotic scenes with dwarves. One of the rooms around the peristyle was built against the rock and probably served as a nymphaeum. A small canal runs along the side and front for the draining of water. The floor of the nymphaeum was decorated with a Nile mosaic (cat. no. 095 C); the water thus flowed over the picture. The decoration of the villa thus had a large number of Nilotic elements, both in the floor and in the wall decoration[184].

Aurigemma 1962, 57-58 (C), 61-62 (E), 62 (D), 71 ff.; *Foucher 1965*, 140; *Cappel 1994*, sv. W39.

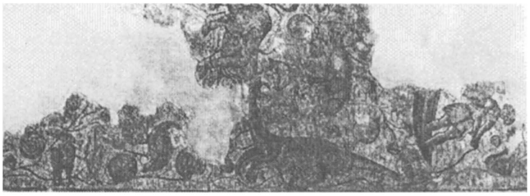
2.4 *Cyrenaica*

2.4.1 *Cyrene*

097 Cyrene

a. Mosaic.
b. City church, side chapels.
c. The north aisle was partly decorated with a Nilotic mosaic while the southeast chapel showed an emblema (0.40 x 0.64) with the same subject.
d. Museum, Cyrene and in situ.
e. Around 539 AD.

A (north chapel): the landscape shows fishes, waterbirds and ducks amid lotus flowers. The central scene depicts a crocodile trying to devour a cow. Also a fisherman in a boat is depicted.



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B (southeast chapel): the central scene shows a crocodile grabbing a cow. A man in tunica is holding the cow by the tail in an attempt to save it. Above this scene two large fishes are depicted amid lotus flowers to indicate the setting. The frame of the emblema also shows fishes and birds.

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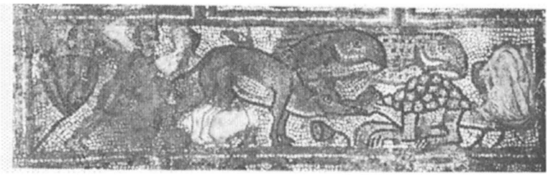
[184] *Aurigemma 1960*, tav. 116 provides a ground plan. For further, general information cf. D.E.L. Haynes, *An archaeological and historical guide to the pre-Islamic antiquities of Tripolitania* (1959) 145-148.



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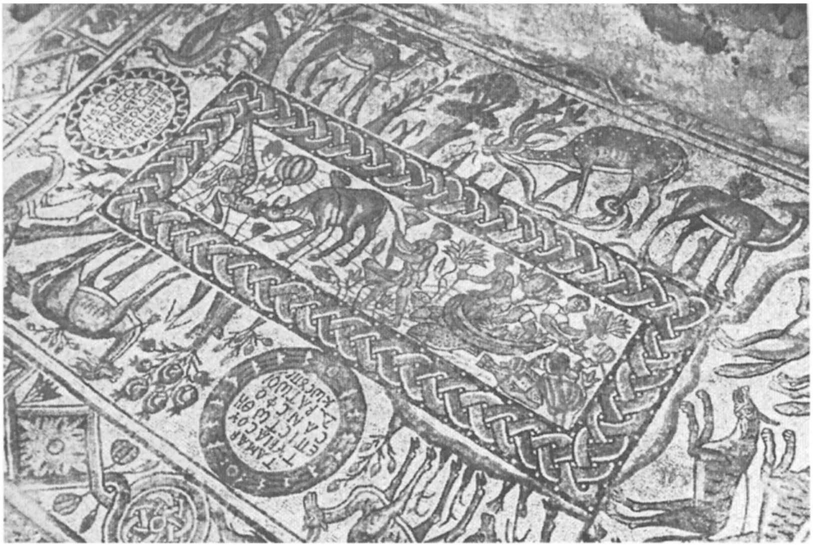
The mosaics are executed by the same workshop which made a similar Nilotic scene in the church of Qasr-el-Lebia (cat. no. 098); with the help of an inscription this mosaic can be dated in the years around AD 539. The two mosaics in Cyrene can therefore roughly be dated in the same period.

J.B. Ward Perkins, A new group of mosaics from Cyrenaica, *RivArchCrist* 34 (1958) 186-191; *Alföldi-Rosenbaum 1975*, 149-153.

2.4.2 *Qasr-el-Lebia*

098 Qasr-el-Lebia

a. Mosaic.
b. City church, chapel.
c. Emblema in the northeast chapel of the church.
d. In situ.
e. 539 AD.



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The right side of the panel shows a boat with two men. One of these is catching a fish with a trident, the other holds a lotus flower with both hands. Also some ducks are depicted. The left side of the picture shows a crocodile trying to devour a cow, while a man in a tunica is holding the threatened animal by the tail. Lotus flowers, other water plants and fishes indicate the setting.

Other mosaics in the church, to dated by an inscription in AD 539, show Nilotic motifs as well, especially large lotus flowers.

J.B. Ward Perkins, A new group of mosaics from Cyrenaica, *RivArchCrist* 34 (1958) 186-191; *Alföldi-Rosenbaum 1975*, 149-153; *Cappel 1994*, sv. U7.

3 *Egypt*

3.1 *Delta*

099 Delta

a. Mosaic.
b. Unknown.
c. Excavations in 1916 revealed a large basin close to the Mediterranean sea in which a large number of mosaic fragments was found. It is not clear if the basin formed part of a complex and its precise function remains unknown. It seems to concern one large Nilotic landscape or perhaps two scenes: a Nilotic marsh scene and a garden scene with fruits, birds and a cock.
d. GRM, Alexandria, 21144-49, 21526-29.
e. Around 100-75 BC.

GRM 21144: plants, fishes and birds
GRM 21145: plants and fruits
GRM 21146: waterbird (ibis?)
GRM 21147: dwarf
GRM 21148: cock
GRM 21149: birds and plants
GRM 21526: plants, birds, ibis, snake
GRM 21527: waterplants and flowers
GRM 21528: plants and fruits
GRM 21529: plants

E. Breccia, *Monuments de l'Egypte Gréco-romaine* I (1926) 43, 82; *Daszewski*

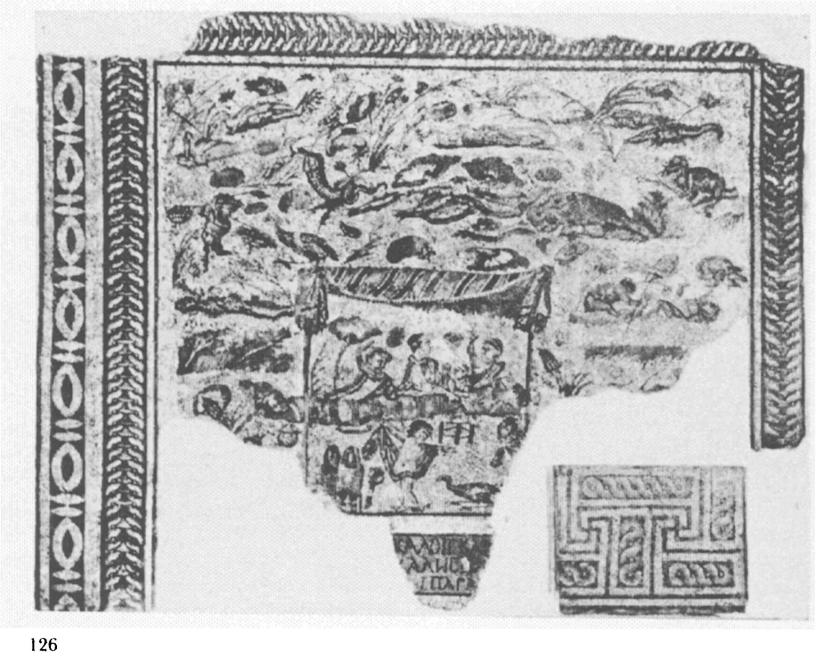
1985, 136-142 sv. no. 28-37; *Cappel 1994*, sv. M5.

3.2 *Tell Roba*

100 Tell Roba (Thmuis)

a. Mosaic.
b. Unknown.
c. The large (about 4 x 5) square mosaic, set in modern concrete, has only been fragmentarily preserved. On the lower left and right side parts of the picture are lost.
d. GRM, Alexandria, 21641.
e. 200-300 AD.

In the centre of the foreground a banquet scene takes place. Three men are lying under a velum and make gesticulating movements. In front of them two dwarves are dancing. In the act of dancing a female dwarf has already bared her upper body. Next to her two amphorae and a lotus flower are depicted. On the right another dwarf is watching the scene. In the background a large marsh scene is depicted with crocodiles, hippopotami, birds and dwarves amid waterplants and stones: a hippopotamus rises from the water and is attacked by a pygmy; another dwarf is fighting a bird; etc.



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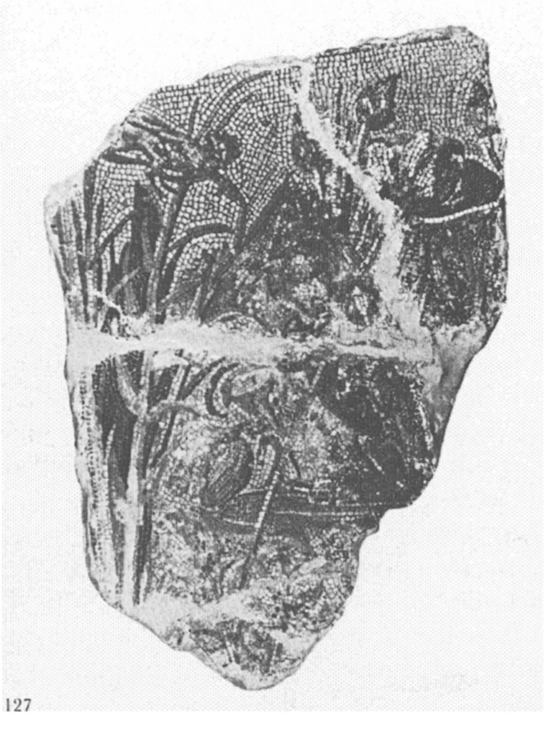
In the lower part of the mosaic an inscription has been preserved on which a dating in the third century AD has been based.

C.C. Edgar, *Archaeological Report (Egyptian Exploration Fund)* (1910) 23; E. Breccia, *Le musée gréco-romaine au cours des années 1925-1931* (1932) 101, 193; *EAA* I (1958) 222 sv. Alessandria, arte; I. Lavin, *The Hunting Mosaics of Antioch and their sources* (1963) 225 n. 202, 273 n. 427; *Adriani 1970*, 84; W.A. Daszewski, in: *Palast und Hütte. Beiträge zum Bauen und Wohnen im Altertum (Symposium Berlin 1979)* (1982) 395 ff.; *Daszewski 1985*, 70 n. 21; *Cappel 1994*, sv. M28; *Meyboom 1995*, IV n. 180.

3.3 *Unknown*

101 Unknown

a. Mosaic.
b. Unknown.
c. Fragment of a small emblema (0.33 x 0.45) found in 1934. The mosaic fragment is sometimes referred to as 'Tell el Amarna' because the picture resembles tomb paintings in Tell el Amarna showing the same kind of marsh scenes.



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d. Agricultural Museum, Cairo, 477.
e. Around 80 BC.

Amid large waterplants and lotuses a dwarf rows a papyrus canoe. He is standing upright and holds a punting pole in his hands. In the lush vegetation a hoopoe is visible.

K. Parlasca, Hellenistische und römische Mosaiken aus Ägypten, in: *La mosaïque gréco-romaine* II (1975) 363-369, 366-367; *Daszewski 1985*, 69-70, 167-168 sv. no. 44; *Cappel 1994*, sv. M4.

4 *European provinces*

4.1 *Hispania*

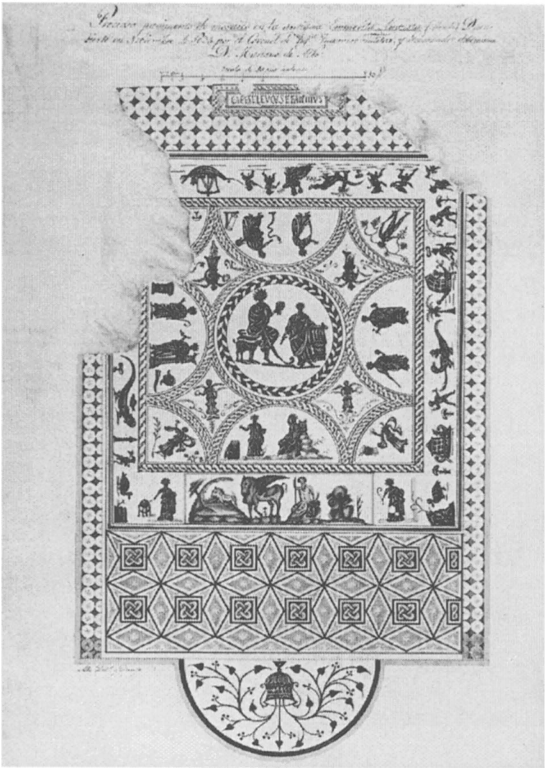
4.1.1 *Mérida*

102 Mérida (Colonia Augusta Emerita)

a. Mosaic.
b. Calle del Portillo, unknown.
c. The mosaic measures 11.2 x 6.3 and has only been fragmentarily preserved. In the central medallion Apollo and one of the muses are depicted. This central panel (4.15 x 4.25) is framed by a band (height 0.43) with a continuing Nilotic scene running over three sides.
d. Museo Nacional de Arte Romano, Mérida.
e. 150-200 AD.

Left band: (on the right) a duck swimming near a rock and a boat sailing the river are depicted between two large lotus plants. The vessel has a remarkable curved stem and stern, a large cabin and is navigated by a dwarf with a pointed hat. On the shore a dwarf is standing with two sticks in both hands while another dwarf is riding a large reptile near a palm tree. Further to the right sails a boat with a stem shaped like an animal head and a pygmy on board. On the shore a bird pecks a dwarf in his large phallus; the pygmy raises his hands and shouts in pain. Next to him one can see another dwarf with a round hat and two sticks in both hands. After a large lotus plant, a dwarf threatening a bird with a stick is placed in the corner.

The second side shows two dancing pygmies with pointed hats and a staff in their hands next to a lotus and a palm tree. Then, a large reptile (probably a crocodile) devours a dwarf. Next to this scene



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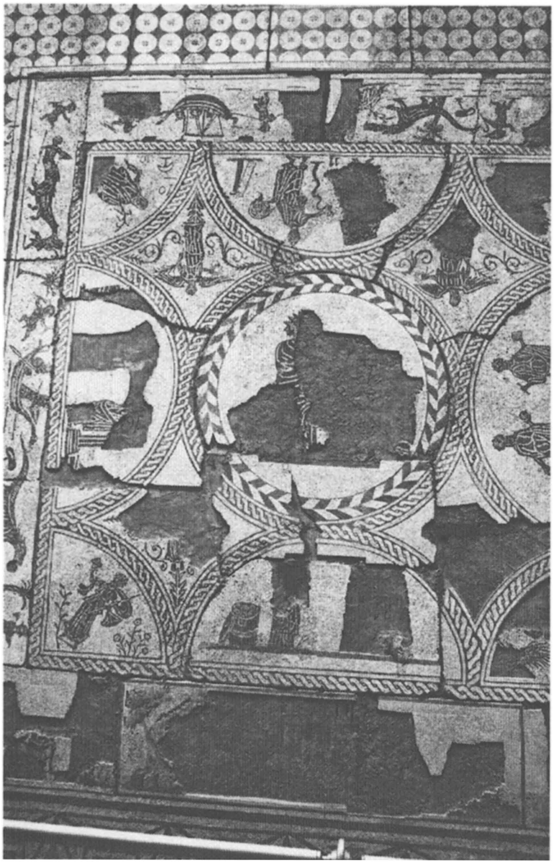
there is a female person sitting with a sistrum in the right hand; perhaps a representation of Isis. Then follow two dwarves pulling a boat filled with amphorae. The last piece of this side is lost, as well as the first part of the third side.

Two fragments found later would fit in this lacuna. The first fragment shows a dancing dwarf with two sticks in both hands next to a boat with two pygmies attacking a large reptile. The second fragment shows a dwarf with a spear and a hat as shield who is devoured by a large reptile. A comrade is holding the animal by its tail, while another dwarf dances away.

The third side also shows a large reptile between a lotus flower, as well as a strange object that could be the trunk of a tree. A fish is depicted above the reptile. On the right walks a dwarf with a stick and a sack over his shoulder. In the corner one can distinguish a duck and a rock with vegetation.



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The original picture can be largely reconstructed with the help of an engraving made in 1834 by Mariano De Albo, shortly after the mosaic was found, and the find of two fragments that can be placed in that part of the frieze that De Albo considered as lost. The mosaic is signed by Seleucus and Anthos.

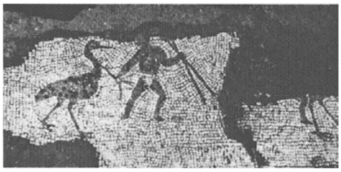
The mosaic decorated the floor of a room almost 12 metres long, of which only the remains of the walls have been preserved.

G. Fernández Pérez, *Historia de las antigüedades de Mérida* (1894); A. Garcia y Bellido, *Les religions orientales dans l'Espagne romaine* (1967) 123 sv. 57; A. Blanco-Freijeiro, *Mosaicos romanos de Mérida* (1978) 30-32 sv. 9; *LIMC* sv. pygmaioi 52a; *Donderer 1989*, 105-106 sv. no. A83 (with further previous literature); *Durán 1993*, 342 ff.; *Cappel 1994*, sv. M16.

103 Mérida (Colonia Augusta Emerita)

a. Mosaic.
b. Unknown, perhaps from a large mansion.
c. The mosaic decorated the floor of a rectangular room measuring 10.6 x 4.2. In the centre of the mosaic stands a medallion with Orpheus surrounded by animals. A rectangular frieze on the right side shows Nilotic themes. The picture is heavily damaged and has been badly preserved.
d. Museo Nacional de Arte Romano, Mérida, 36.193.
e. 300-400 AD.

One can distinguish dwarves and cranes, while the Nilotic setting is indicated by large lotus plants. One fragment shows a pygmy holding a crane with a rope, while another dwarf with a large thrusting weapon is standing in front of an altar. Another fragment shows a pygmy with a small hat standing next to a large lotus flower and being attacked by a large bird. From a third fragment only a dwarf who seems to have fled into a tree has been preserved. A fourth fragment shows a pygmy with two large sticks in his left hand, who is leading a crane with a rope in his other hand.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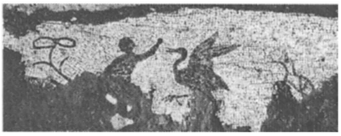
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For a detailed description see the publication of Alvarez Martinez (1990).

The fragmentarily preserved Orpheus mosaic from Mérida, which, besides vintage scenes and other themes, also contains Nilotic scenes, was discovered during construction work in the Traversía de Pedro Ma Plano. It decorated the floor of a rectangular hall. Because of the surrounding buildings, a further excavation of the remains was not possible, and the context therefore remains unknown. In view of the location in the town, it is not unlikely that we are dealing with a house[185].

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[185] For all information, see Alvarez Martinez (1990). For houses in the Roman town of Mérida in general, cf. J.M. Alvarez Martinez (ed.), *Conjunto Arqueólogico de Mérida. Patrimonio de la Humanidad* (1994) 87-112 with further bibliography.

J.M. Alvarez Martinez, *Mosaicos Romanos de Merida. Nuevos Hallazgos* (1990) 37-49 sv. 3; J.M. Alvarez Martinez, Nuevos documentos para la iconografia de Orfeo en la musivaria hispanoromana, in: P. Johnson, R. Ling, D.J. Smith (eds.), *Fifth International Colloquium on Ancient Mosaics* (Bath 1987) (1994) 211 ff., esp. 211.

4.1.2 *Itálica*

104 Itálica (Colonia Aelia Augusta Italica)

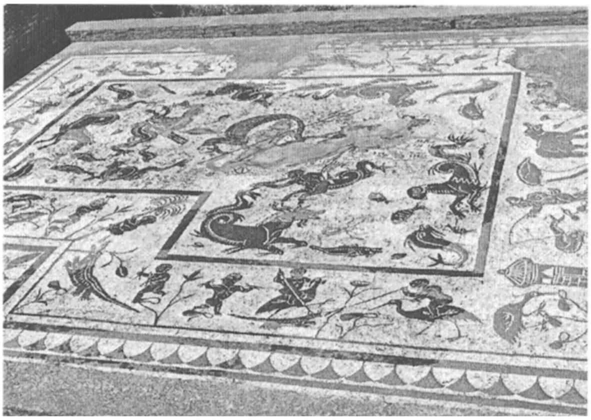
a. Mosaic.
b. Casa de Neptuno, pool.
c. In the mosaic (measuring 8.7 x 7.3) a picture of Neptune among all kinds of marine animals is framed on all sides by a Nilotic frieze with a height of 0.3-0.4. A small flight of stairs was placed on the left which has influenced the picture and given the frieze an irregular shape.
d. In situ, under restoration (1997).
e. Around 200 AD.

The lower register starts on the left with a dwarf on a lotus flower who is attacking a crane with a trident. At the same time his eyes are being pecked out by another crane. On the right a dwarf with a double axe is standing on a lotus flower. One can also see a pygmy climbing a palm tree in order to escape from a crocodile. Behind the animal a dwarf walking with two sticks in both hands and two pygmies riding cranes and attacking a crocodile with tridents are depicted.

The next register shows a crane eating from a lotus flower in the corner. After a Nilometer follows a fishing pygmy with a round hat and a basket in his hand. Next to the dwarf a very large lotus flower and a hippopotamus are depicted. The rest of this part of the frieze is lost.

The first part of the third register is also lost. Then one distinguishes a dwarf wearing the top of an amphora as a hat who is fighting a crane. After a waterplant, a crocodile is devouring a pygmy, while another dwarf is trying to save his comrade. After a damaged part follows a dwarf standing on a lotus flower. He is holding a bow and seems to be using a lotus flower as arrow. He is aiming at a crane that has successfully attacked another pygmy. And finally, a dwarf with two sticks in both hands seems to be dancing next to a lotus flower.

The fourth register shows a lotus flower and a waterbird. Then a dwarf is fighting a crane; he uses the top of an amphora as shield and is holding a spear in his right hand. One can also distinguish a dwarf holding two sticks in both hands, who is walking on the back of a crocodile. The animal is attacked by a pygmy with a shield and a spear, who himself is being pecked in the buttocks by a crane.



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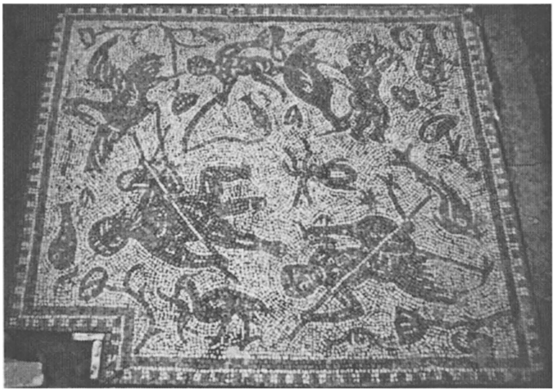
The house, named after the described mosaic, is only partly excavated but nonetheless well published. We are dealing here with a large and luxurious house with a private bath. The mosaic, in which Neptune surrounded by a Nilotic frieze is the focal point, decorated the floor of a swimming pool which was part of the private bathing place. The shape of the mosaic was adapted to this function: there were stone steps at the lower left side. A coin from 135-137 AD was found beneath the mosaic, providing a terminus post-quem.

A. Blanco Freijeiro, J.M. Lúzon, *El mosaico de Neptuno en Itálica* (1974) (with previous literature); A. Blanco Freijeiro, in: *XIII Congresso Nacional de Arqueologia 1973* (1975) 917-920; *Dúran 1993*, 39-49; J.M. Blázquez, Mosaicos hispanos de tema homérico, in: *VI Coloquio Internacional Sobre Mosaico Antiguo* (1994) 297 ff.; *LIMC* sv. pygmaioi 52; *Cappel 1994*, sv. M15.

105 Itálica (Colonia Aelia Augusta Italica)

a. Mosaic.
b. House, referred to as Casa del Ginnasio or Casa de la Exedra, latrine.
c. The floor decoration (1.6 x 2.15) has only been fragmentarily preserved and is often referred to as 'mosaico de los negritos'.
d. In situ.
e. Around 200 AD.

Dwarves fighting Nilotic animals are depicted. Everywhere between the different scenes are placed lotuses, fishes and other water animals. On the left in the foreground a dwarf is riding a crane. He is trying to seize a dolphin with his trident. To his left and right large lotus flowers are depicted. Above this scene a dwarf with a beard and a large phallus is fighting a crane. To his left, differently orientated, a smaller water bird is eating from a plant. On the right side of the picture a pygmy is catching a fish. Below this scene a crane is pecking a dwarf in the buttocks.



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As in the Casa di Neptuno, we are dealing with a relatively large town house[186].

A. Garcia y Bellido, *Colonia Aelia Augusta Italica* (1960) 132; A. Balil, Un mosaico Nilotico de la Betica, *Cuadernos (–) Roma* 13 (1969) 91-119 (= *Estudios sobre mosaicos romanos* II (1971)) (with previous literature); A. Blanco Freijeiro, J.M. Lúzon, *El mosaico de Neptuno en Itálica* (1974) 45-46; *LIMC* sv. pygmaioi 53c; *Dúran 1993*, 36-39; *Cappel 1994*, sv. M27.

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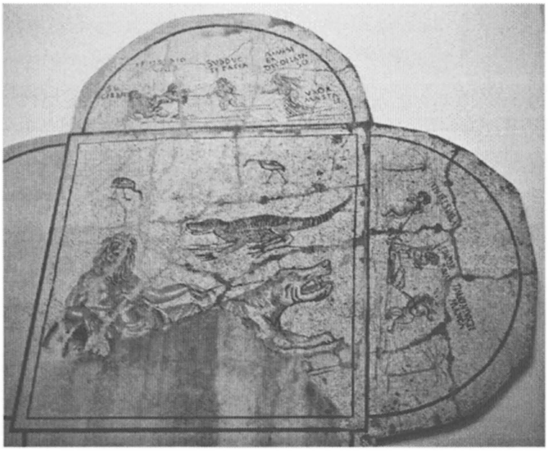
[186] For a discussion of the Casa de la Exedra, cf. Garcia y Bellido (sv. no.) 94-102 sv. 19 and fig. 31 (plan).

4.1.3 *Puente Genil*

106 Puente Genil

a. Mosaic.
b. Villa.
c. It concerns a central square measuring 3 x 3 with four semicircular forms around it. This whole can be interpreted as a Nilotic scene. The apse forms at the top and on the right side of the square have been well preserved; from the other two only fragments remain.
d. Provincial Archaeological Museum, Cordoba, 29.489.
e. 300-400 AD.

A (square): the personification of the river Nile is depicted with long hair, a long beard and a stout body. Around him one can see two ibises, a hippopotamus and a crocodile.
B (upper apse): a dwarf is being attacked by a crane or a large ibis in the genital zone. From the right another dwarf and a female pygmy are approaching. Remarkable are the inscriptions placed above the persons. Above the attacked dwarf is written *su cerbio*, above the bird *e fili gerio vale.* Near the second pygmy is written *subduc te pater* and above the woman *ai misera decollata* and *uxor mastale.*
C (right apse): three dwarves are depicted between a palm tree on either side of the picture. Apparently the crane has been killed; the body is being pulled away by a dwarf with a rope. The inscription reads *et tu era suma.* In the middle, one can see a dwarf standing with a stick in his raised hands and the inscription *e importuna.* Another dwarf is helping the dead crane being dragged away. The inscription reads *timio ne vecti franga.*
D (apse below): only fragments of an inscription have been preserved reading *selvam grave[m].*
E (left apse): totally lost. At the time of the excavation the remains of a dwarf were still visible.



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The mosaic has been comprehensively published by Daviault, Lancha and Lopez-Paloma.

The four scenes constitute different episodes of one story. Lancha supposes that the inscriptions, in bad Latin, were added later, which might explain their strange placing, and thinks of a piece of prose or mime as example. Rawson doubts the suggestion that the picture could refer to mime because in reality it would have been impossible to stage cranes attacking dwarves. According to Pedraz, the presence of the geranomachia would illustrate the cosmopolitanism of the owner of the house.

This exceptional mosaic, found near Puente Genil, forms part of a Roman villa discovered and excavated in 1982. More decorative remains of the villa have been preserved, amongst other things a mosaic showing the triumph of Bacchus and mosaics with satyrs, nymphs and graces. The large room A where the mosaic was found is sometimes interpreted as an oecus or triclinium.

A. Daviault, J. Lancha, L.A. Lopez-Paloma, *Un mosaico con inscripciones. Puente Genil (Cordoba)* (1987); E. Rawson, A mosaic of a mime?, *JRA* 1 (1988) 169; G. López Monteagudo et. al., El simbolismo del matrimonio en el mosaico de Fuente Alamo (Puente Genil, Córdoba) y otros mosaicos hispanos inéditos, *Latomus* 47 (1988) 785-804, esp. 785-795 (=J.M. Blázquez, *Mosaicos romanos de Espana* (1993) 458-475); M.P.S.N. Pedraz, Mosaicos y espacio en la villa romana de Fuente Alamo (Córdoba, Espana), in: A. Mastino, P. Ruggeri (eds.), *L'Africa romana. Atti del X convegno di studio. Oristano 1992* (1994) 1289-1304;

Cappel 1994, 90-92 and sv. M26; *Meyboom 1995*, III n. 17; J. Gómez Pallarìs, *Edición y comentario de las inscripciones sobre mosaico de Hispania. Inscripciones no cristianas* (1997) index sv.; *Muth 1998*, 438-439 sv. H27.

4.2 *Gallia*

4.2.1 *Lyon*

107 Lyon (Lugdunum)

a. Mosaic.
b. Insula V, domus, large room at the peristyle.
c. A number of floor mosaics was discovered at the present Rue Roger Radisson in the years 1911/14. One room (14.3 x 12) was decorated with a simple mosaic floor showing a framed rectangle in the middle (4.3 x 4, the frame is about 0.5 high). Only this frame showing a Nilotic frieze has been partly preserved. Some ancient restorations are visible in the upper part.
d. In situ, however not visible nowadays ("sans doute laissée en place").
e. 175-200 AD.

A (below, south): in the left corner a pygmy rows a boat. With his left hand he is tending the helm, while he is holding a fishing rod in his right hand. A lotus plant indicates the setting. The middle part of this side of the frieze, which probably showed two marine animals apart from a vase, is lost. On the right one can distinguish the back of one of the marine animals, a fish and another dwarf in a boat.
B (left, west): two dolphins flanking a vase, as well as two lotus plants and a fish have been preserved.
C (above, north): only a large fish, the vase and a sea horse are still visible. Only in the left corner a pygmy (wearing a pointed hat) in a boat seems to have been portrayed. Some ancient restorations on this side.
D (right, east): a sea horse, part of the vase and (on the extreme left) a crab have been preserved.

The mosaic decorated the floor of the large room 8, adjoining a peristyle, and was part of the domus, which would have covered an area in excess of 1000 m^2 [187].

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[187] For all information on this context cf. E. Delaval, *L'habitat privé de deux in-*

C. Germain de Montauzan, *Les fouilles de Fourvière en 1913-1914* (Annales de l'Université de Lyon, nouvelle série II. Droit, Lettres, fasc. 30) (1915) 42-46; Ph. Fabia, *Recherches sur les mosaïques romaines de Lyon* (1924) 50-52 sv. no. 48; H. Stern, *Recueil général des mosaiques de la Gaule*, II. *Province de Lyonnaise* I. *Lyon* (1967) 56-58 sv. no. 61; *Leclant 1984a*, 442.

108 Lyon (Lugdunum)

a. Painting.
b. Cybele temple (?).
c. Only a fragment of the painted decoration of a wall has been preserved.
d. ?
e. 25 BC—AD 25.

Two armed pygmies attack a large ibis in what seems to be a Nilotic environment.

A. Audin, Dossier des fouilles du sanctuaire lyonnais de Cybèle et de ses abords, *Gallia* 43 (1985) 81-126, 118-119.

4.2.2 *Mercin et Vaux*

109 Mercin et Vaux

a. Painting.
b. Villa.
c. Four panels with a height of 0.34 decorating the predella of a wall can be reconstructed. Only fragments of the paintings have been preserved.
d. Soissons, Musée Municipal, 81.4.96, 81.4.103.
e. 80-100 AD.

A (left): a waterbird is facing a snake among waterplants.
B: a bird seizes a dwarf who is depicted relatively small. Some waterplants indicate the setting.
C: lost.

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sulae de la ville haute de Lugdunum (Lyon) sous le Haut-Empire Romain (Colline de Fourvière, clos du Verbe incarné). Contribution à la connaissance de l'architecture domestique en Gaule romaine (Ier siècle av. J.-C. / IIIe siècle ap. J.C.) (1995). Part VIII of this 'thèse de doctorat, Université de Provence' has the title *Corpus des habitations Lyonnaises*. The domus concerned is discussed on pp. 47-53. Cf. also part VI, 566, 568.

D (right): a dwarf is falling backward, trying to avoid the confrontation with a water bird. Behind the bird another pygmy is depicted.

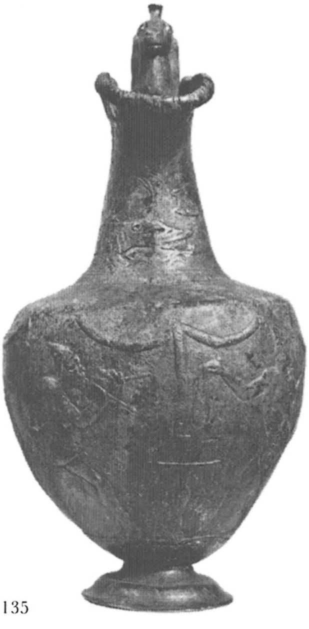
The remains of a Roman villa near the village of Mercin et Vaux have been extensively published[188].

J.M. Desbordes, *Gallia* 31 (1973) 325-326; A. Barbet, La villa romaine de Mercin-et-Vaux (Aisne) in: *La peinture murale romaine de la Picardie a la Normandie* (1982) 49-55 (with further previous literature); *Leclant 1984a*, 441; *Cappel 1994*, sv. W36; R. Thomas, *Die Dekorationssysteme der römischen Wandmalerei von augusteïscher bis in trajanische Zeit* (1995) 298.

4.2.3 *Roches de Condrieu*

110 Roches de Condrieu

a. Relief.
b. Villa.
c. A Nilotic scene decorates the neck of a bronze vase found in the



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[188] Cf. A. Barbet, Mercin et Vaux (Aisne): un établissement gallo-romain à bassin en forme de T, *Revue du Nord* 211 (1971) and in particular A. Barbet, Fouilles de Mercin et Vaux (Aisne): un habitat gallo-romain rural. Zone de la cave et des puits, *Cahiers archéologiques de Picardie* 8 (1981) 65-146.

ruins of a Gallo-Roman villa. The body of the vase is decorated with feasting dwarves.
d. Louvre, Paris, BR 2765.
e. 0-100 AD.

A (neck): a dwarf with a hat, a large stick and a shield in his hands approaches a crocodile sitting among the waterplants.
B (body): on the left a dwarf is dancing with his arms raised in the air. In the middle one can see two dwarves standing around a table with some pottery on it. One plays a double oboe, while the other is holding a drinking vessel in his hand. Another pygmy seems to be taking something out of an oven. All pygmies are wearing pointed hats. Garlands and an amphora are hanging from the wall.

W. Frohner, *Musées de France* (1873) 75; S. Reinach, *Répertoire des reliefs grecs et romains* II (1912) 291; A. De Ridder, *Les bronzes antiques: Musée du Louvre* (1913) sv. no. 2765; *Leclant 1984*, 442; LIMC sv. pygmaioi 58; H. Chew, *Revue du Louvre* (1996).

4.2.4 *Villars*

111 Villars

a. Painting.
b. Villa.
c. A monograph from 1841 is devoted to the Roman villa in Villars (non vidi).
d. Lost.
e. 50-100 AD.

In the centre of the picture dancers and other persons were depicted. Next to this group, two naked men with spears as well as an ichneumon are looking at a crocodile sitting among the waterplants.

F. Wagnien, *Description de la villa romana et de la mosaique découvertes à Villars* (1841) pl. opposite no. 2; *Leclant 1984a*, 441-442 (with previous literature).

4.2.5 *Villelaure*

112 Villelaure

a. Mosaic.
b. Villa, room B.

c. Room B (4.56 x 7), of what probably was a Roman villa, was decorated with a Nilotic mosaic of which two fragments remain.
d. Unknown.
e. 200-300 AD.

A (first fragment): a building on a podium can be seen close to the river. A bird is flying in the sky, while a date palm is growing on the right. A crocodile is swimming in the river. Two pygmy hunters are pointing in the direction of the animal.
B (second fragment): a crocodile is swimming in the water among waterplants. In the background a building on a podium is visible.

For all detailled information see Lavagne.

In 1900 remains of a building were discovered in a spot called La Tuilière; it probably concerns a villa. In four rooms the mosaic floor decoration had been preserved; apart from these mosaics, nothing else had remained. There were two well-preserved mosaics (showing Dares and Entellus, and Diana and Callisto), a Nilotic mosaic in two fragments, as well as a mosaic of which only the frame had been preserved. For a while the mosaics could be seen in situ, thereafter the owner of the land sold them to an antique dealer in Paris, via whom the two well-preserved mosaics ended up in the USA. The mosaic showing Dares and Entellus was traced by Lavagne to the J. Paul Getty Museum in Malibu[189]. A search of many years by an inhabitant of Villelaure has revealed that the second well-preserved mosaic, showing Diana and Callisto framed by a hunting frieze, is in the Los Angeles County Museum[190]. The two Nilotic fragments have vanished. It seems however not unlikely that they, together with the other two preserved figurative scenes, were sold on to some collector in America.

A. Héron de Villefosse, *BA* (1900) 103 and (1903) 3-32, 14-20, pl. II (colourplate); G. Lafaye, *Inventaire des mosaiques de la Gaule* I, 1 *Narbonaise et Aquitaine* (1909) sv. no. 103; *Leclant 1984a*, 442; H. Lavagne, *Recueil général des mosaïques de la Gaule*, III. *Province de Narbonnaise* 3. *Partie sud-est* (2000) 306-315, 308-309 sv. 914 (with previous literature).

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[189] Cf. H. Lavagne, Une mosaïque gallo-romaine au Musée J. Paul Getty, *The J. Paul Getty Museum Journal* 5 (1977) 177-182 and H. Lavagne, Le combat de Darès et Entelle (Énéide V, 362-482) sur une mosaïque de Villelaure (Vaucluse), in: R. Chevallier (ed.), *Présence de Vergile. Actes du colloque des 9, 11 et 12 décembre 1976. Paris E.N.S., Tours* (1978) 133-146.

[190] C. Seignoret, Safari mosaïque..., *Vaucluse Dimanche*, 16 août 1987.

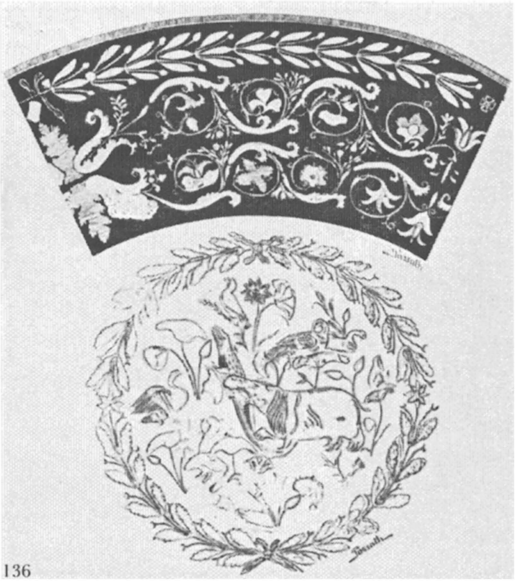
4.3 *Pannonia*

4.3.1 *Egyed*

113 Egyed

a. Relief.
b. Unknown.
c. A simple Nilotic scene decorates a copper patera with a diameter of 23.4.
d. National Historical Museum, Budapest, 10.1951.105.
e. 0-100 AD.

A hippopotamus, a crocodile and four ducks are swimming among waterplants and lotuses.



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The patera was found in 1831, together with a hydria decorated with Egyptian cultic scenes. The objects have therefore been associated with the Isis sanctuary in Savaria. Although this is certainly not impossible, the distance between the findspot and the sanctuary is rather large for a direct assocation to be likely[191].

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[191] Cf. for this issue the sv. no. mentioned publication of Wessetzky, 42-45.

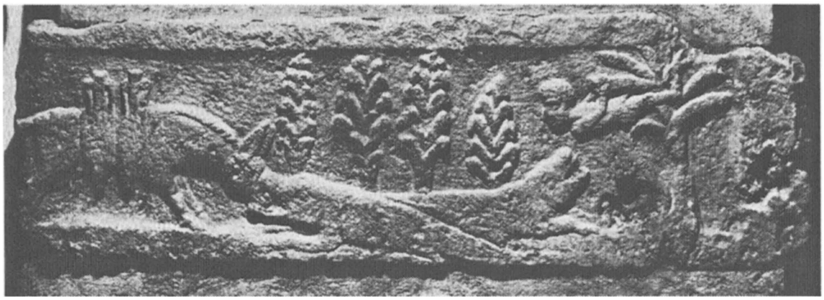
W. von Bissing, Die Darstellungen auf den Gefässen von Egyed, *JdI* 24 (1909); V. Wessetzky, *Die ägyptischen Kulte der Römerzeit in Ungarn* (1961) 42-45 (with further previous literature); *De Vos 1980*, 84, 91, 94; *Iside* sv. VI. 21.

4.3.2 *Székesfehévar*

114 Székesfehévar

a. Relief.
b. Unknown.
c. The relief fragment (1.75 x 0.52 x 0.15) is made of limestone.
d. Museum, Gorsium.
e. 100-200 AD.

A mule with two large amphorae on its back walking along the river is seized by a crocodile. On the right another reptile is trying to grab a dwarf who is just managing to flee behind a palm tree.



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A. Dobrovits, A Székesféharvari Muzeum 'Nilusi jelenet' dombormüve, *Szémüvészet* (1942) 11-14; A. Dobrovits, Az Egyptomi Kultuszok emléke Aquincumban, *BpRég* XIII (1943) 47-75 (English summary 494-497); J. Leclant, Un relief pannonien d'inspiration égyptisante, *RA* 36 (1950) 147-149; V. Wessetzky, *Die ägyptischen Kulte der Römerzeit in Ungarn* (1961) 9; *Alföldi-Rosenbaum 1975*, 151.

4.4 *Illyricum*

4.4.1 *Perm*

115 Perm

a. Relief.
b. Unknown.
c. Golden patera decorated with Nilotic subjects: the surrounding frieze depicts a marsh scene, while a medallion in the centre shows dwarves.
d. Hermitage, St. Petersburg.
e. Around 500-525 AD.

A (surrounding frieze): crocodiles, ducks and snakes are depicted between lotuses and other waterplants.
B (medallion): lotuses and fishes indicate the setting in which two dwarves are standing next to a Nilometer. One dwarf is bent down while the other is standing on his back in order to inscribe the Nilometer.

A. Hermann, Die Ankunft des Nils, *ZÄS* 85 (1960) 35-42; *Meyboom 1995*, III n. 77.

4.5 *Dalmatia*

4.5.1 *Salonae*

116 Salonae

a. Relief.
b. Unknown.
c. Relief fragment (0.38 x 0.32) of Italian marble. It is possible that the fragment formed part of the basin of a fountain.
d. Museum, Split, D 150.
e. 100-200 AD.

Two dwarves in a boat are sailing the river. On their right another pygmy is being attacked by a hippopotamus, a crocodile and two lobsters.

In the second century AD, Salonae was an internationally orientated seaport where more Egyptian influences are noticeable[192].

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[192] Cf. Ch. IV 1.3; *Budischovsky 1978* and L. Vidman, Zu einem Isisdenkmal

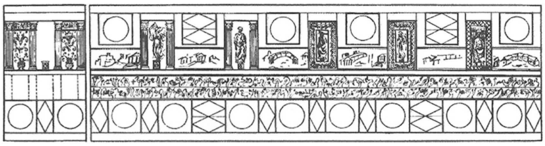
K. Prijateli, Einige hellenistische Elemente in der Kunst des antiken Salona, *Archeologia Jugoslavica* I (1954) 29-35; *Budischovsky 1977*, 199 sv. Salonae 9 (with further previous literature); *LIMC* sv. pygmaioi 54.

4.6 *Graecia*

4.6.1 *Kenchreai*

117 Kenchreai

a. Inlaid glass.
b. Unknown.
c. Plaques of opus sectile in glass were found, stored in wooden frames. In total there was decoration to cover a surface of 150 m^2 but it is not known how the panels would have been placed. Eighteen panels showing a marsh scene were found of which fifteen have been preserved. The excavators reconstruct a frieze depicting a marsh scene running above the socle of the wall and with a total length of about 33 m.
d. Isthmia, Museum.
e. Around 370 AD.



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(panel 1): birds and waterplants are depicted. A starling can be recognized as well as flamingoes and ducks.
(panel 2): birds and waterplants are depicted. A flamingo has been well preserved; also some large lotus flowers are visible.
(panel 3): besides waterplants and birds, a crocodile is visible. A crocodile rider must be reconstructed on the animal's back.
(panel 4): besides the badly preserved waterplants and birds a crocodile is visible.
(panel 5): of this panel only seven small fragments remain, not showing recognisable elements.

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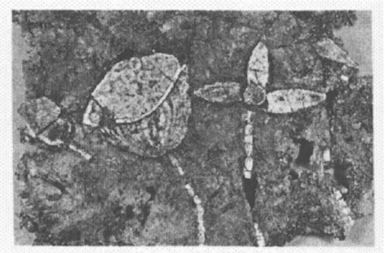
aus Salonae, in: *Hommages Vermaseren* III, 1296-1299, which discusses the lid of a sarcophagus on which a young boy is depicted with a typical Horus lock.

(panel 6): a cow is standing among the waterplants and birds.
(panel 7): a small man is depicted among the waterplants and birds; probably a pygmy holding a bird in his outstretched hands.
(panel 8): badly preserved; some birds are depicted among waterplants.
(panel 9): again birds and waterplants are depicted. In this panel, however, more flowers and leaves are depicted than in any other panel. Perhaps the legs of a person can be distinguished.
(panel 10): birds and waterplant can be seen. One flower, depicted in detail, stands out.
(panel 11): badly preserved; only a bird is still visible.
(panel 12): badly preserved; only fragments remain.
(panel 13): badly preserved; only fragments remain.
(panel 14): badly preserved; only fragments remain.
(panel 15): badly preserved; some fragments of rocks seem to be depicted.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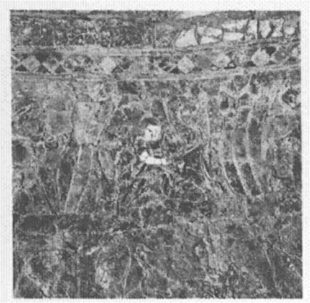
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For all information and detailed drawings and photographs see the excavation report of the American team that carried out the excavation and preservation of the panels in the 1960's.

Apart from the Nilotic marsh landscape, more panels showing figurative representations have been preserved. There is a large number of panels with marine panoramas showing buildings on the water's edge, ships, fishermen, etc. The trees depicted in these images are North African species while the pavilions on the water's edge often also appear in Nilotic scenes; perhaps these marine scenes therefore also are Egyptianising. Thus Ibrahim (in *Kenchreai*) suggests associating the waterscapes with the Nilotic marsh scene: both pictures would represent an Egyptian landscape. Apart from these two kinds of figurative panels, panels with geometric and floral motifs have been found, and a group of panels has been preserved showing figures like consuls, philosophers, and mythical figures. The entire decorative programme therefore consisted of heterogeneous elements: Egyptian, Graeco-Roman, as well as Coptic. For various reasons an Alexandrian origin of the opus sectile panels seems most likely.

The panels in opus sectile, still in wooden crates, had apparently just arrived and were ready to be used. There were some hundred panels, never unpacked because the area was struck by a devastating earthquake c. AD 375. Shortly afterwards the collapsed remains of the buildings were filled, built over and they thereby became buried. The plaster, to which the glass was applied, therefore became detached, with the result that the panels could not be moved without disintegrating into many small pieces. This seriously hampered the excavation. The panels were stored in a hall with an apse and a fountain at the far end, which may have served as a nymphaeum. Southwest of the room was a building identified by the excavators as an Isis sanctuary. The basements of this building were level with the hall and apse, and were even connected to it. It therefore does not seem unlikely that the area was part of the building. The identification of the building as an Isis sanctuary is founded only on a remark by Pausanias that there was an Isis temple in Kenchreai; it is therefore speculative and should be questioned[193].

Kenchreai, 30-57 (description of the swamp scenes), 104-141 (discussion); *Cappel 1994*, sv. U8; R.M. Rothaus, *RGRW* 139 (2000).

4.6.2 *Corinth*

118 Corinth

a. Painting.
b. Tomb, corridor.
c. The wall-paintings of the corridor of the tomb show dwarves feasting on and at the river Nile. The scenes did not form an entity but were placed randomly against an empty background.
d. Archaeological Museum, Corinth, A596 and A597.
e. 0-50 AD.

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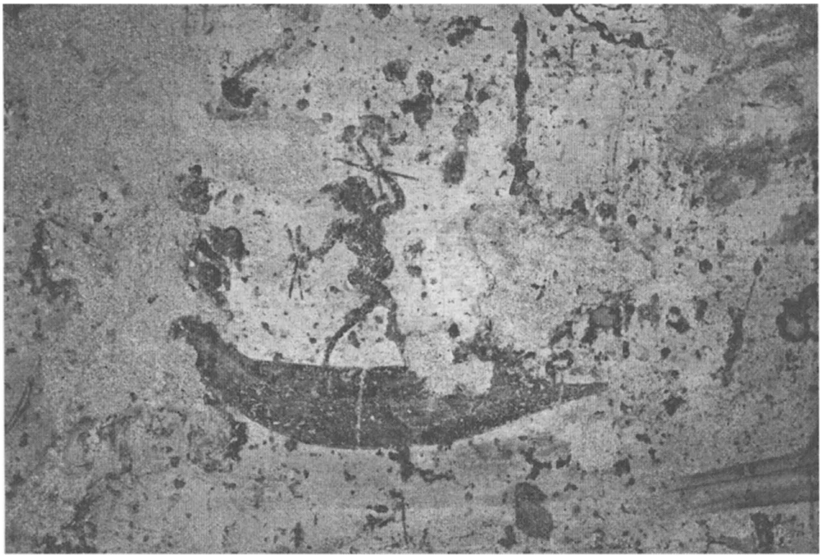
[193] See already *Wild 1984*, 1764-1767 sv. 7.



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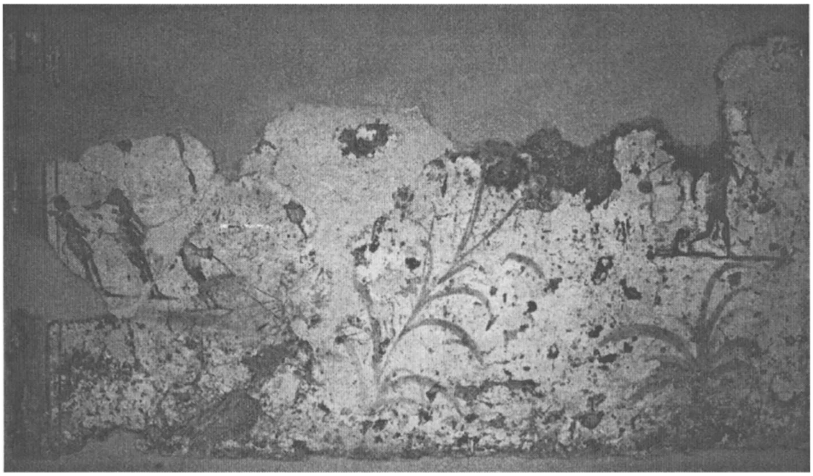
Dwarves are dancing and making music on boats, as well as hauling in fishnets. Each time the landscape is schematically indicated.



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The Roman tomb near Corinth, discovered in 1962, was cut out of the rock and contained three chambers. The entrance hall was connected to the back room by a small corridor which was decorated with feasting dwarves in a Nilotic environment. The grave and the paintings should probably be dated to the Augustan period (or perhaps even 50 years later); the tomb remained in use until the third century AD.

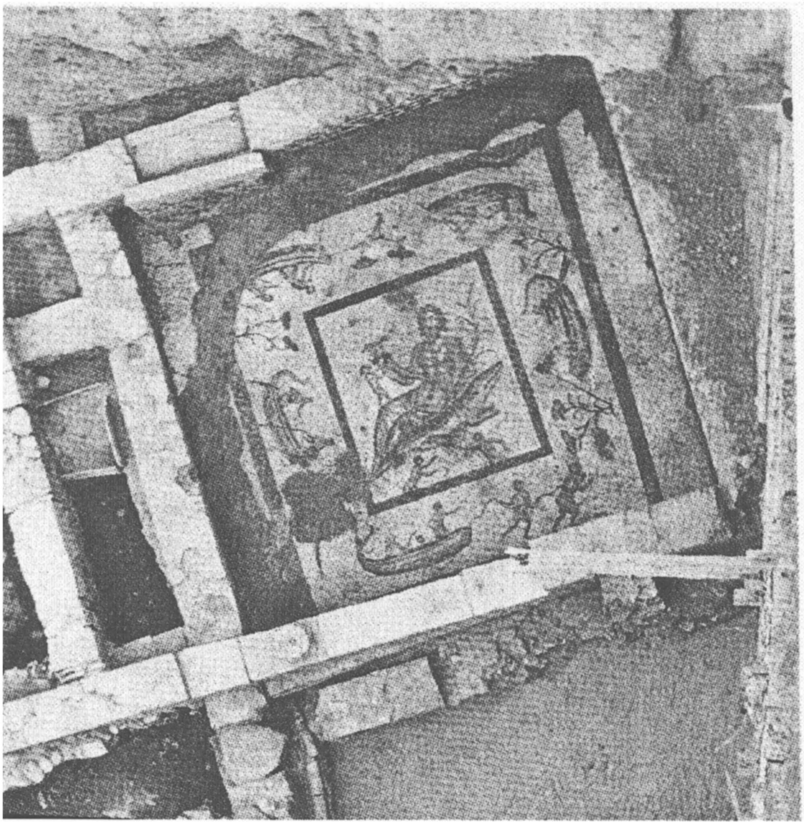
H.S. Robinson, Excavations at Corinth, *AD* 18 (1963) Chronika, 76-80, 77; H.S. Robinson, Excavations at Ancient Corinth, 1959-1963, *Klio* 46 (1965) 289-305, 293.

4.6.3 *Patras*

119 Patras

a. Mosaic
b. House (under present Odos Kanakari 205), triclinium.
c. The Nilotic scene, damaged at the left upper and lower side, forms a frieze around a central part showing the personification of the river Nile on a crocodile.
d. In situ (?).
e. 200-300 AD.

Five boats with pygmies are depicted in a Nilotic environment with large lotus flowers.



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I. Papapostolou, *ADelt* 39 (1980) taf. 79; G. Touchais, *BCH* 113 (1989) 619, taf. 71; *Cappel 1994*, sv. M30.

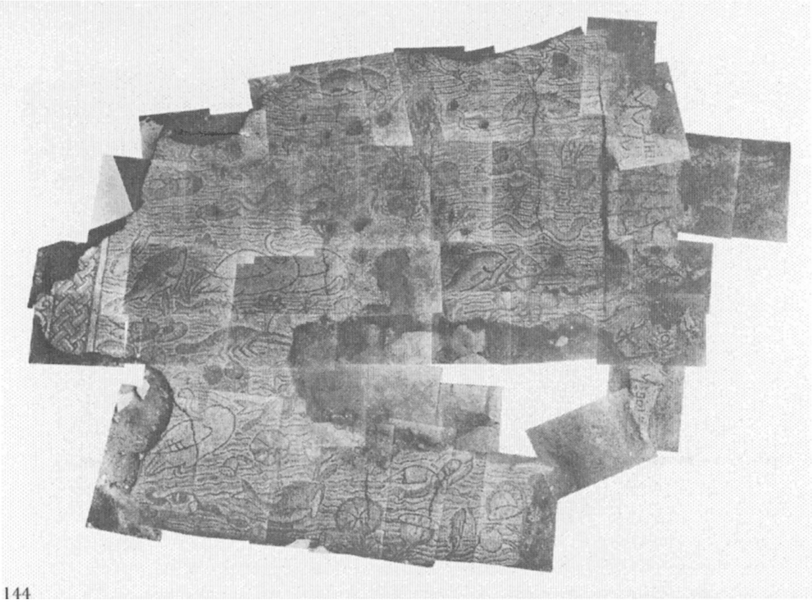
4.6.4 *Thebes*

120 Thebes

a. Mosaic.
b. Unknown.
c. Fragmentarily preserved mosaic. Only on the left side part of the border can be distinguished. The fragment measures 5 x 6.
d. First Ephorate of Byzantine antiquities, Athens.
e. 400-600 AD.

One can see a waterscape with undulating lines indicating the water. Everywhere flowers, plants (o.a. papyrus), fish, ducks, large water birds and other water animals are depicted. Typical Nilotic features are the lotus flowers; the pair of ducks one of which turns its head and the duck sitting on a lotus bud. Also local fish and sea-animals are visible. A figure holding a hydria has been preserved with next to it parts of inscriptions.

The inscription next to the figure with the hydria possibly refers to a personification of the water sources. This seems to be confirmed



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by another, only partly preserved inscription, which may be reconstructed as *neilos*; a personification of the river Nile would also have been present. The large fragment thus seems to present a mixture of local elements (the personification of the water sources could refer to actual sources nearby) and Nilotic features; as does the mosaic from Et-Tábgha (cat. no 127).

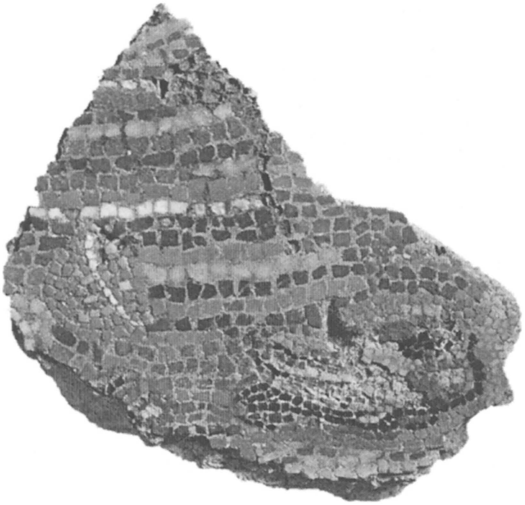
A. Theodorou-Mavrommatidi, Anaskafes sto neo apocheteutiko diktuo Thinas, in: *Epeteris tes Hetaireias Boiotikon Meleton* 2 (1995) 514-519; *SEG* 45 (1995) sv. 448.

4.6.5 *Delos*

121 Delos

a. Mosaic.
b. So-called maison de Fourni, first floor.
c. The small fragment of opus vermiculatum measuring 0.10 x 0.12 was found together with two other figurative mosaic fragments. It remains, however, unclear if these belong to the same pavement.
d. Archaeological Museum, Delos.
e. Around 100 BC.

An aquatic scene with a duck among plants is depicted. Behind the duck a lotus flower is clearly visible.



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The date of the Delos mosaics in general is set around 100 BC.

Little is known about the maison de Fourni, excavated by French archaeologists. Many more mosaic fragments were found on the same floor of the building. The high quality and the execution in opus vermiculatum seem to suggest that the house was luxuriously decorated.

Ph. Bruneau, *Exploration archéologique de Délos faite par l'École française d'Athènes*, XXIX. *Les mosaïques* (1972) 313-314 sv. no. 335c, fig. 287; A.M. Guimer-Sorbets, M.D. Nenna, L'emploi du verre, de la faience et de la peinture dans les mosaïques de Délos, *BCH* 116 (1992) 609-631, 617, pl. IV1; *Tammisto 1997*, 374 sv. NS 11.

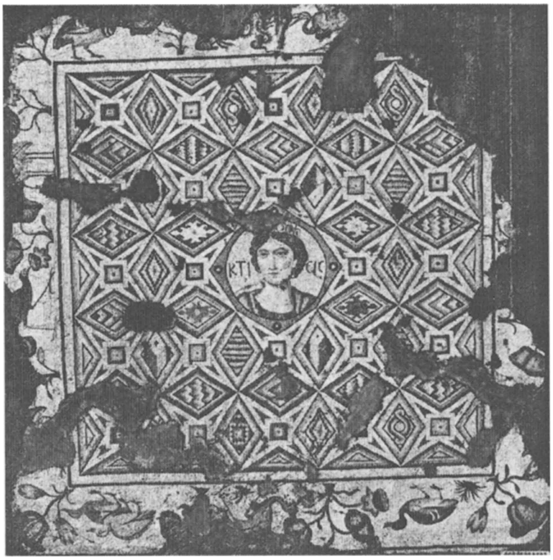
5 *Near Eastern provinces*

5.1 *Syria*

5.1.1 *Antiochia*

122 Antiochia

a. Mosaic.
b. House of Ge and the seasons, room 4.
c. Fragments of the floor decoration show the picture of a woman



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set in a medallion. A heavily damaged frieze surrounding the medallion shows Nilotic plants and animals.
d. Art Museum, Worchester (USA).
e. 450-475 AD.

Birds are standing between large lotus flowers. It concerns realisticaly depicted ducks and three long-legged birds one of whom tries to seize a snake.

The woman can be identified by an inscription reading *Ktisis*: the personification of 'the moment of creation'. The association of *Ktisis* with Nilotic subjects, and thus the inundation of the Nile, may be explained by the fact that they both represent the starting point of life.

Also a mosaic showing ducks and lotuses as decorative elements was found. The remains of the house have been so badly preserved that nothing can be said about the functions of the different rooms.

Worchester Art Museum Annual II (1936-1937) 19; C.R. Morey, *The mosaics of Antioch* (1938) 39-40; *Antioch-on-the-Orontes*, II. *The excavations of 1933-1936* (1938) 194 sv. no. 81; *Levi 1947*, 346-347 (with further previous literature); *Balty 1984*, 830; LIMC sv. Ktisis 3.

5.1.2 *Hama*

123 Hama

a. Mosaic.
b. Unknown. "Vestiges découverts au Métropolitanat".
c. The geometric floor decoration of a room shows a large, figurative panel with a Nilotic landscape. The left side of the picture has been damaged.
d. In situ.
e. Around 416 AD.

The Nile with a fish and a boat full of amphorae can be seen in the foreground. Marshes with waterplants, lotuses, birds and ducks are depicted behind it.

Donceel-Voûte 1988, 454; eadem, Le Ve siècle dans les mosaïques syriennes, *La mosaïque gréco-romaine* IV, 205-210, pl. cxix.

5.1.3 Qumnir el-Qubli

124 Qumnir el-Qubli (Apameia)

a. Mosaic.
b. Unknown.
c. –
d. ?
e. 400-600 AD.

A river landscape showing lotuses, fishes and cranes as well as boats loaded with amphorae is depicted.

Balty 1984, 830.

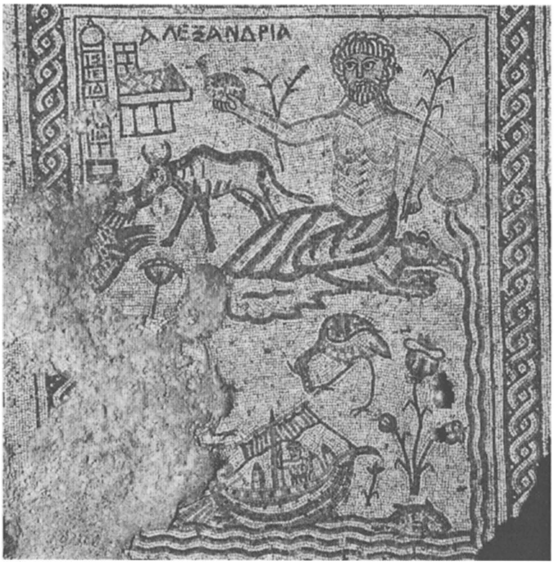
5.2 *Palaestina*

5.2.1 *Beth Shean*

125 Beth Shean (Scythopolis)

a. Mosaic.
b. So called House of Kyrios Leontis.
c. The mosaic decorated the floor of a room that measures 8.8 x 3.2 and consists of three scenes. The northern part shows Ulysses and the Sirens while in the middle a large inscription is placed in a medallion with a menorah surrounded by birds. The southern part shows a Nilotic scene. This part of the mosaic is heavily damaged on the lower left side.
d. Israel Museum, Jerusalem.
e. 500-600 AD.

In the upper right side the Nile god is visible. He is reclining on what seems to be a crocodile or hippopotamus and holds a duck and a long ear in his hands while water runs from a jar at his knees and from the animal he is lying on. Next to him a building with the inscription *alexandria* and a Nilometer are depicted. In front of the Nilometer one can distinguish a cow being devoured by a crocodile. Also a lotus plant is visible. The lower scene shows the river with a sailing ship loaded with amphorae and a man on board. A fish swims in the water while a large lotus plant and a waterbird are depicted on the river bank.



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The building known by the name House of Kyrios Leontis, in fact is a synagogue. Probably guest rooms were present around the actual sanctuary, making it also function as a kind of inn. The mosaic with Ulysses a Nilotic landscape would come from such a guest room.

N. Zori, The house of Kyrios Leontis at Beth Shean, *IEJ* 16 (1966) 123-134; N. Zori, Chronique Archéologique. Beth Shean, *RBibl* 74 (1967) 92-93; *Jentel 1982*, 445-447; *Alföldi-Rosenbaum 1975*, 151; *Balty 1984*, 828; *Ovadiah 1987*, sv. no. 31; *Meyboom 1995,* III n. 77; *Israel*, 233 sv. Beth-Shean at the foot of the mound/Synagogue ('House of Leontius').

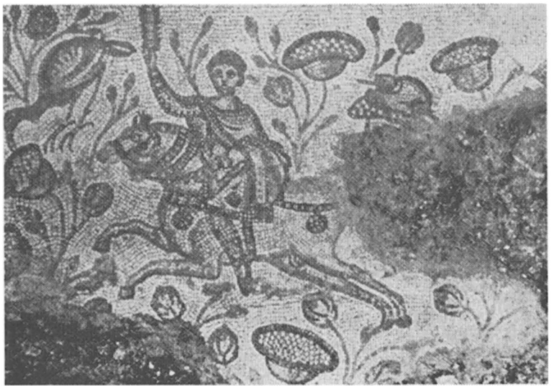
5.2.2 *Beit Jibrin*

126 Beit Jibrin

a. Mosaic.
b. Villa.
c. The mosaic decorated the floor of a room measuring 9.5 x 5. It consists of a central part showing circles and squares with the personifications of three seasons and the earth. This central part is framed by a band of flowers and a frieze showing scenes of daily life and hunting scenes. The lower side of this frieze has a Nilotic character. In the centre a fourth medallion is placed

showing the personification of the missing fourth season: Winter.
d. ?
e. 400-600 AD.

To the right of the medallion a man on a galloping horse is depicted amid very large lotus plants. In his raised right hand he holds a sistrum. Between the lotus plants an ibis is walking.
The picture to the left of the medallion is only known by a description of the excavator Vincent: "un jeune éléphant prend ses ébats parmi les bouquets du parc; un aigle arrête son vol au milieu des fleurs; un peuplier, entouré des oiseaux aquatiques, laisse soupçonner un cours d'eau".



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L.H. Vincent, Une villa gréco-romaine à Beit Djebrin, *RBibl* 31 (1922) 259-281; *Levi 1947*; 577 n. 89; *Balty 1984*, 829.

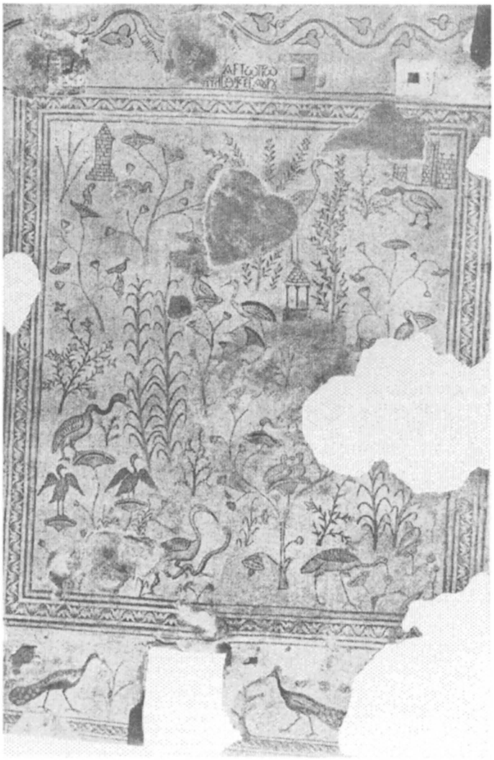
5.2.3 *Et-Tábgha*

127 Et-Tábgha (Heptapegon)

a. Mosaic.
b. Church of the multiplication of bread and fish, on both sides of the presbyterium at the far end of the trancepts.
c. The northern mosaic (6.5 x 5.5) has been well preserved; the southern mosaic is heavily damaged.
d. In situ.
e. Around 450 AD.

A (northern mosaic): many different kinds of waterbirds are depicted in a landscape filled with large lotus plants and other vegetation:

ducks, snipes, herons, different kinds of geese, etc. Some birds are eating while an ibis is attacking a snake. Some buildings are depicted inbetween the plants: one distinguishes a Nilometer, a round building and another pavilion.



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B (southern mosaic): same kind of composition. Some birds and large lotus flowers are still visible. On the right the top of a Nilometer with the Greek numbers 6 to 10 can be distinguished.

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The birds are all Palestinian species; only the lotuses and Nilometers are typical Egyptian elements. Similar constructions, however, were also used to measure the water level in lake Tiberias. There is still a discussion about the date of the mosaics. Schneider proposed the second half of the fourth century AD, which Crowfoot thought too early. Loffreda dates the mosaics in the sixth century AD. A date around AD 450 seems generally accepted nowadays, making the Tábgha mosaics one of the first figurative scenes in Christian churches.

The remains of this early Christian church at lake Tiberias were studied by different scholars; the building history of the complex, entirely rebuilt in the 1980's, is therefore well-known. An inscription dates the building of a triple-naved basilica after AD 486, on the spot where already earlier, probably around AD 350, stood a small sanctuary. The inscription also names the founder, a certain Martyrius. He had been patriarch in Jerusalem and is known to have lived in Egypt as a monk for a long time. The choice of the two Nilotic mosaics possible can be (partly) understood against this background.

A.M. Schneider, *Die Brotvermehrungskirche von et-Tabgha am Genesarethsee und ihre Mosaiken* (1934) 51-79; J.W. Crowfoot, *Early churches in Palestine* (1941) 73-77, 122-124; E. Kitzinger, in: *La mosaïque gréco-romaine* I, 349; P.S. Loffreda, *The sanctuaries of Tabgha* (1981); *Balty 1984*, 827-828; *Meyboom 1995*, III n. 77/78, VII n. 47; *Israel*, 614-616 sv. Heptapegon (with further previous literature); K.D. Dunbabin, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman world* (1999) 194-195.

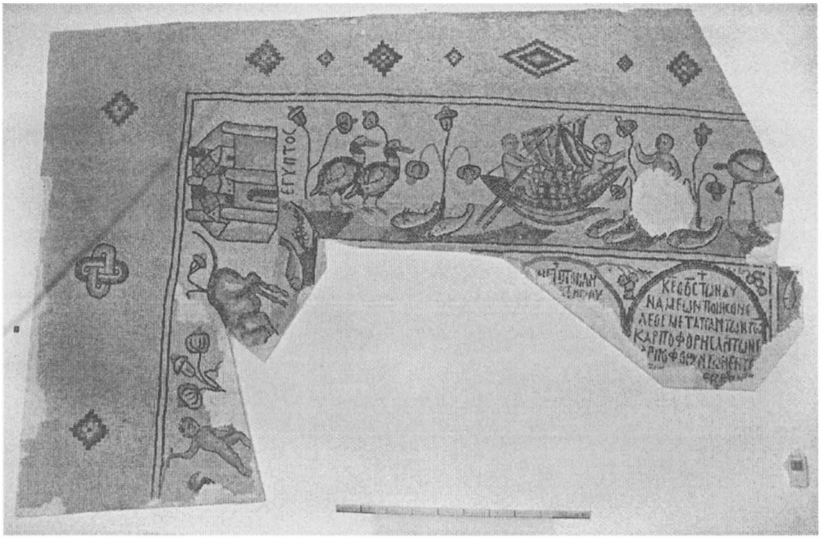
5.2.4 *Hadita*

128 Hadita

a. Mosaic.
b. Unknown.
c. The polychrome mosaic decorated the floor of a room that measures 5.25 x 4.25. Only the upper side, the upper part of the left side and a small part of the right side have been preserved. Around the central picture runs a frieze (height: 0.6) with a Nilotic scene.
d. National Maritime Museum, Haifa.
e. 550-600 AD.

The picture starts at the north side with a (fragmentarily preserved) bird. Next to it stands a naked man with a stick in his raised hand. A large lotus flower indicates the setting. Next to the flower stands a cow with a bent head. The remainder of the picture is lost but it seems logical to reconstruct a crocodile that arises from the water trying to seize the animal. The man with a stick in his hand is obviously trying to defend his cow. On the extreme right of this part of the frieze two fishes are visible, as well as the river running in the foreground. In the corner a city is depicted with the inscription *egyptos*.

The frieze on the upper (east) side continues with two ducks standing between large lotus plants. In the foreground the water of the river is depicted with two fish. Also a boat, filled with amphorae, is sailing on the river. On the quarterdeck one can see a rowing man. On the forecastle stands another man who stretches out his hand to a third person behind a large lotus plant. All three persons are naked. Three fish are swimming in the water. Further to the right again a large lotus flower and remains of a crane are visible.



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When the mosaic was discovered, only the remains of the walls of the structure in which it was found had been preserved. The function of this context thus remains unknown.

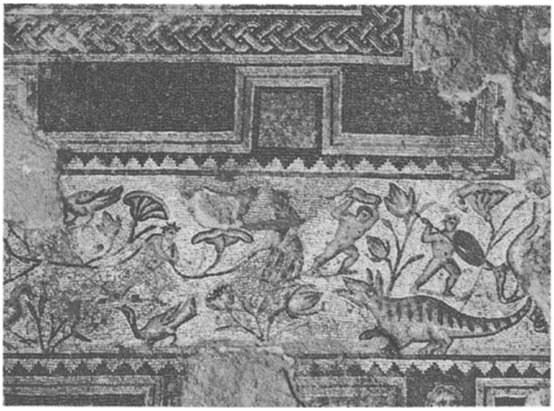
M. Avi-Yonah, The Hadita Mosaic Pavement, *IsrExplJ* 22 (1972) 118-122 (= *Sefunim. Bulletin of the National Maritime Museum of Haifa* V (1976) 61-66); *Ovadiah 1987*, sv. no. 86.

5.2.5 *Sepphoris*

129 Sepphoris (Diocaesarea)

a. Mosaic.
b. Villa, triclinium.
c. The floor of the triclinium was decorated with a large mosaic measuring 7 x 5.5. Around the central part of the mosaic runs a band of white tesserae at the north side. This surrounding frame is completed at the southern side by a similar U-shaped band showing figurative scenes, surrounded by portraits and other decorations. The central part of the mosaic consists of panels showing scenes of the life and the cult of Dionysos. The southern-side frame shows a rural procession in his honour and was already restored in Antiquity with a panel showing a Nilotic scene. Technically and stylistically this part is of inferior quality compared to the original mosaic.
d. In situ (Archaeological park, Sepphoris).
e. 250-300 AD.

On the left side one can distinguish a bird, large lotus flowers and bathing women. A lacuna in the middle is followed by two naked dwarves between birds and large lotus plants. Together they are pulling the stem of a large lotus flower that ends up in the hands of another, clothed, dwarf. Perhaps a pygmy who has fallen in the water or is being attacked by a crocodile must be reconstructed in the lost part, while his comrades try to help him out. The following scene shows two pygmies attacking a crocodile and a crane. One of them holds a club in his raised hands, the other carries a shield and spear.



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The house from which this triclinium mosaic has been preserved is located on the acropolis, south of the theatre. The residence was built at the beginning of the third century AD and was destroyed by an earthquake in AD 363. The large triclinium with a view on a peristyle seems to have been the most impressive room in the house[194].

E.M. Meyers, E. Netzer, C.L. Meyers, *Biblical Archaeologist* 50 (1987) 223-231; E.M. Meyers, E. Netzer, C.L. Meyers, A mansion in the Sepphoris acropolis and its splendid mosaic, *Qadmoniot* 21 (1988) 87-92; *Biblical Archaeological Review* 14-1 (1988) 30-33; E.M. Meyers, E. Netzer, C.L. Meyers, Sepphoris (Sippori) 1987 and 1988 (I), *IsrExplJ* 40 (1990) 219-222; *Cappel 1994*, sv. M29; *Netzer/Weiss 1994*, 30-39.

130 Sepphoris (Diocaesarea)

a. Mosaic.
b. Building on the southeast side of the acropolis, so-called Nile festival house.
c. The largest room of the building is almost square and has a figurative Nilotic mosaic as floor decoration. The continuing picture can be subdivided into four registers. The mosaic has been well preserved; only in the right part is some damage visible.
d. In situ (Archaeological park, Sepphoris).
e. 500-600 AD.

In the upper left side a reclining woman with a naked upper body holds a cornucopiae with her left hand while she leans on a basket with fruit. Above her head part of a Greek inscription is still visible: *aigy[ptos]*. In front of this personification of Egypt stand three hooved animals. On the right the Nile god is lying on a hippopotamus; his head and upper body are lost. In front of him one can distinguish three gift bringing putti. Between the personifications of Egypt and the Nile, a Nilometer is depicted with two more putti. One has climbed on the other's back in order to engrave the height of the inundation on the meter.

Below these scenes the river is depicted as coming from the mouth of the hippopotamus and flowing all over the picture. The base of the Nilometer is standing in the river, as well as a large bird holding a snake in his beak, a duck and a fisherman. Also some fishes are depicted.

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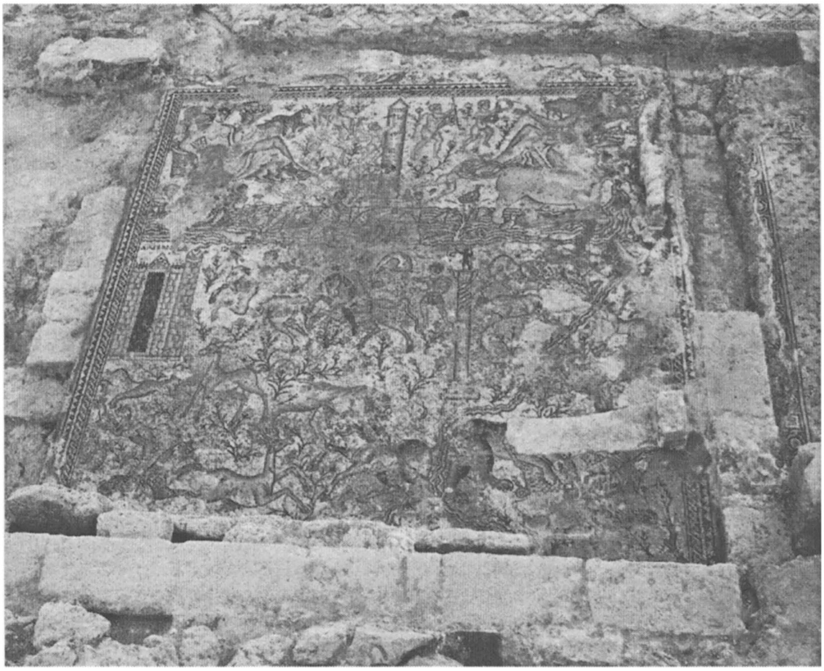
[194] See for all information *Netzer/Weiss 1994*, 30-39. For the city of Sepphoris and the archaeological research taking place cf. the exhibition catalogue edited by R. Martin Nagy, *Sepphoris in Galilee. Crosscurrents of culture* (1996) and the summary by Z. Weiss in *Israel*, 1324-1328 sv. Sepphoris. Cf. for the Sepphoris mosaics most recently *JRA* suppl. 40 (non vidi).

The third horizontal zone shows a group of horsemen galloping in the direction of a schematically depicted city with the inscription *alexan[dri]a.* The city is depicted as a gate with two towers. Next to the right tower one can see another tower with a flame coming from the top: the Pharos seems indicated. A Nile arm runs through this part of the picture. One of the galloping men is holding a torch in his hand. Behind this group stands a boy in a tunica next to a column on a base, crowned by the statue of a man. The right side of this part of the picture shows fighting animals, as does the lowest part.

In the centre a lion is attacking a cow. On the left side two large, feline animals are chasing antelopes. A third feline tries to seize two mice. One of them disappears out of the picture. On the right a bear is attacking a wild boar. Plants are indicated everywhere between the animals.



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Netzer and Weiss suggest that the column should be interpreted as the column of Pompey, dedicated to Diocletian in the third century AD and placed next to the Serapeum in Alexandria.
Their interpretation in general sees the mosaic as depicting elements connected with the Nile festival as well as hunting scenes. It seems however that not those two separate elements are being depicted but that the mosaic illustrates in an allegorical way the affluence of nature and well-being in general, illustrated by two popular motifs with that meaning: the Nile inundation and hunting scenes.

This sixth century AD Nilotic mosaic decorated the floor of a room in the so-called Nile festival house; a large complex in the lower city of Sepphoris. The complex takes up a large part of an insula and probably originally covered an area of 50 x 30 metres. The Nilotic mosaic was found in 1991 in a relatively large room measuring 6.7 x 6.2 on the west side of the house, north of a central hall. This hall, as well as the room with the Nilotic mosaic, had a system of drainpipes by which the rooms could be flooded. A Nilotic landscape, thus seen through a layer of water, would then be an appropriate floor decoration. From written sources we know that in the Byzantine period the so-called Maiuma festival, celebrating the harvest, was celebrated. A mosaic showing the Nile flood would be much in its place in such a context. The excavators assume that the Nile festival house was a public complex because of its large size. The ground plan, however, does show similarities with large late-Roman mansions and villae in general; the possibility that it concerns a huge domus, can thus not be excluded.

E. Netzer, Z. Weiss, New mosaic art from Sepphoris, *Biblical Archaeological Review* 18-6 (1992) 37 ff.; *Netzer/Weiss 1994*, 45-54; *Meyboom 1995*, index sv.

5.2.6 *Zay al-Gharby*

131 Zay al-Gharby (Zia)

a. Mosaic.
b. Unknown.
c. It concerns a complex consisting of two rectangular rooms with a vestibule. The largest room (27.4 x 9.7) was decorated with a floor mosaic from which parts of the geometric frame and the

central figurative panel have been preserved. This central panel showed a Nilotic scene.

d. ?

e. 400-600 AD.

A boat with two people sails the river. Large lotusflowers are visible as well as the legs of a bird, a crocodile, depicted with a dog's head, and a fish. In the background stands a church flanked by two towers.

Piccirillo 1993, 37, 324.

PART III

NILOTIC SCENES IN THE ROMAN WORLD. INTERPRETATION AND CONTEXTUALISATION

NILOTIC SCENES IN THE ROMAN WORLD. INTERPRETATION AND CONTEXTUALISATION

In order to discuss Nilotic scenes in general and to arrive at a reconstruction of their function, it will first be necessary to provide answers to some basic questions. In the presentation of the status quaestionis it was shown that general views on the genre are nearly always based on a non-representative selection of the preserved material, thereby losing their general validity from the start. For that reason too, there is still no comprehensive iconological analysis, which is felt as a great deficiency in the interpretation of both the individual scenes and the genre in general.

To begin with, an overview will therefore be given of the topographical distribution: where do Nilotic landscapes occur and in which numbers? Next the chronological distribution will be mapped. When are Nilotic scenes popular and is it possible to find connections with the topographical distribution? A third important question concerns the application of the archaeological material collected in the catalogue: from which different contexts do Nilotic scenes derive and can we find there relations with the topographical and chronological distribution? After thus having mapped the Nilotic scenes as genre, the images themselves require further attention. What do Nilotic landscapes show and what meaning did these images have for the observer in Antiquity? Based on an inventory of the depicted elements, as well as an interpretation of their meaning, the representations will be analysed and interpreted. At the end, resting on the conclusions that these four questions will generate, an attempt will be made to reconstruct the function of the genre.

1 *Topographical distribution*

Nilotic scenes occur in nearly all parts of the Roman Empire, but mainly in Italy. Table 1 gives an overview of this distribution[195]. Nilotic

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[195] A division of the Roman territory as given in table 1 always remains random to a certain extent. In this case it was decided to distinguish a number of large geographical/cultural entities which were also perceived as such in the Roman

Table 1. Distribution of Nilotic scenes over the various parts of the Roman Empire.

area	number of Nilotic scenes	%
Italy	84	64.1 %
North Africa	14	10.7 %
Egypt	3	2.3 %
European provinces	20	15.3 %
Near East	10	7.6 %
total	131	100 %

scenes have thus been recovered in nearly all parts of the Roman territory, in its most extensive form, which would suggest a great popularity. As more than half of all Nilotic landscapes have been preserved in Italy, it seems useful to also map the distribution of the Nilotic scenes in Italy (table 2). It shows that, though the majority originate from Latium (mainly Rome) and Campania (mainly Pompeii), examples have been recovered dispersed over the whole country, with the exception of the far north and the far south. In a statistical sense, the unique preservation condition in Pompeii is a distorting factor[196].

This best-preserved Roman town nevertheless illustrates how popular Nilotic scenes apparently were in the Roman world in the first century BC and AD. If in a normal provincial town like Pompeii, not specifically connected with Egypt or Egyptian culture, already (at least) 39 Nilotic scenes can be found in thermae, houses, villae, Roman sanctuaries, cult places for Egyptian gods, and in tombs, then hypothetical numbers for the whole of Italy soon run in many (tens

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period. For Italy, the mother country, the Roman territories in North Africa (Numidia, Africa Proconsularis, Africa Tripolitana and Cyrenaica) and the Near East (Syria, Phoenicia and Palaestina), this is evident. For the 'European provinces' (Hispania, Gallia, Pannonia and Graecia) less so; however, a subdivision did not seem useful nor necessary for the examination of the Nilotic scenes. Also the distinction of Egypt as a separate group is tied in with the subject of this study, even though Egypt was added to the Empire as an imperial province and thus had a special position. Because Nilotic scenes may have their source in Egypt and Egyptian art, it can perhaps be assumed that (in certain aspects) they differ from the other examples of the genre and it therefore seems useful to study them as a separate category.

[196] In Pompeii itself 39 Nilotic landscapes have been preserved. This is more than a quarter (30 %) of the total. If we take the whole area affected by the eruption of the Vesuvius, it even amounts to 38% of the material (cat. no. 028-078).

Table 2. Distribution of Nilotic scenes over the various parts of Italy.

province		number of Nilotic scenes	%
I.	Latium	27	32.1 %
I.	Campania	51	60.7 %
II.	Apulia	–	–
III.	Lucania/Bruttium	–	–
IV.	Samnium	1	1.2 %
V.	Picenum	1	1.2 %
VI.	Umbria	1	1.2 %
VII.	Etruria	1	1.2 %
VIII.	Aemilia	–	–
IX.	Liguria	–	–
X.	Venetia	2	2.4 %
XI.	Transpadana	–	–
total		84	100 %

of) thousands[197]. The wide distribution, both in Italy and over the entire Roman Empire, endorses this image.

Paintings, mosaics or reliefs were usually a rather expensive form of architectural decoration. These kinds of decorations, amongst them the Nilotic landscapes, are hence mainly found in those parts of the Empire where there was a high degree of Romanisation and where a luxurious living and/or decoration culture had developed, along Roman lines[198]. Striking is the absence so far of Nilotic scenes on the west coast of Asia Minor and in Roman Britain.

2 *Chronological distribution*

Nilotic scenes occur in the Roman world from the end of the second century BC until the end of the 6th century AD. The periods in which they were popular differ from area to area. Moreover, it is noticeable that their appearance changes significantly in this period and that it is rather different in each part of the Empire. It will therefore be necessary to give an overview of the chronological distribution in the areas indicated in section 1 of this chapter. Due to the large number of Nilotic scenes in Italy, this group needs to be specified further. Based on the distribution of Nilotic scenes over the various parts of Italy (table 2), a subdivision into the categories 'Latium', 'Campania' and 'other provinces' seems natural.

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[197] See, however, also the remarks made on the distribution of Nilotic scenes in Pompeii in Ch. IV 3.

[198] The meaning of the notion Romanisation is complex. I mean to indicate here in a practical sense the extent to which Roman customs, such the application of Nilotic elements, were adopted by (members of) the indigenous population. A lucid introduction to the problem in general can be found in G. Woolf, *Becoming Roman. The origins of provincial civilisation in Gaul* (1998) 1-23 (Ch. 1: On Romanisation). See for different aspects also S.E. Alcock, The problem of Romanization. The power of Athens, in: M.C. Hoff, S.I. Rotroff (eds.), *The Romanization of Athens. Proceedings of an international conference held at Lincoln, Nebraska, 1996* (1997) 1-17 and the discussion in *AD* 8-2 (2001) 90-122.

In order to prevent lists with references to the catalogue, it was decided to resume briefly the catalogue, by area, in seven tables at the end of the book. In the relevant table one can find the catalogue number, the topographical indication and (coded) the date and context. The data required for this chapter are thus available at a glance[199].

2.1 *Latium*

The chronological distribution of the 27 Nilotic scenes from Latium is graphically represented in diagram 1. It is noticeable that the phenomenon occurs over a very long period of time, from the period around 100 BC until the middle of the fourth century AD. The preserved material suggests a relatively great popularity in the second century AD. Nilotic scenes already occur to a relatively large extent also in the Republican period and during the early imperial period.

2.2 *Campania*

The 51 Campanian examples show a different picture (diagram 2). The unique preservation of Pompeii forms of course a statistically distorting factor, which clearly shows in the chronological distribution. Also in Campania, Nilotic scenes occur to a relatively high degree in the first century BC. The huge quantity of material from the first century AD dates mainly from the period 40-79 AD and seems to underline the general occurrence and the great popularity of the genre.

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[199] See the tables at the end of the book. Letters refer to the date: A=1st century BC, B=1st century AD, C=2nd century AD, D=3rd/4th century AD, E=5th/6th century AD. Numbers refer to the context: 1=public building, 2=house/villa, 3=sanctuary 4=tomb, 5=unknown.

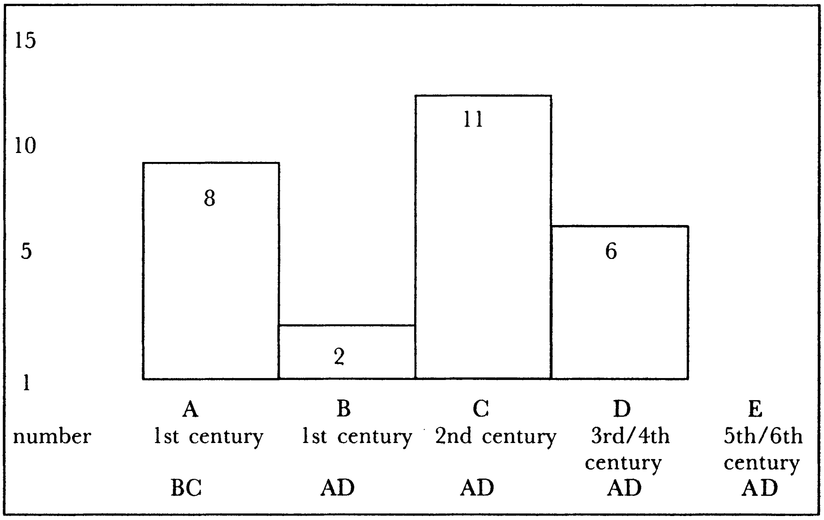

Diagram 1. Nilotic scenes in Latium, Italy (catalogue nos. 001-027), chronological distribution.

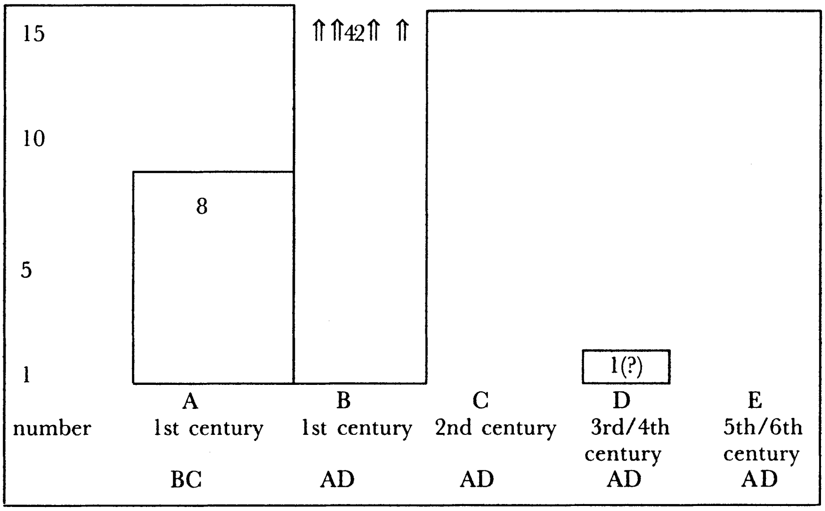

Diagram 2. Nilotic scenes in Campania, Italy (catalogue nos. 028-078), chronological distribution.

2.3 *Other provinces in Italy*

The other provinces where Nilotic landscapes have been recovered complete the picture of Italy (diagram 3). Despite the small number, the chronological distribution seems to be in keeping with the examples found in Latium: a continuous occurrence from the first century BC onwards, with a relatively large popularity in the second century AD, if any statements can be made on the basis of the small number of examples.

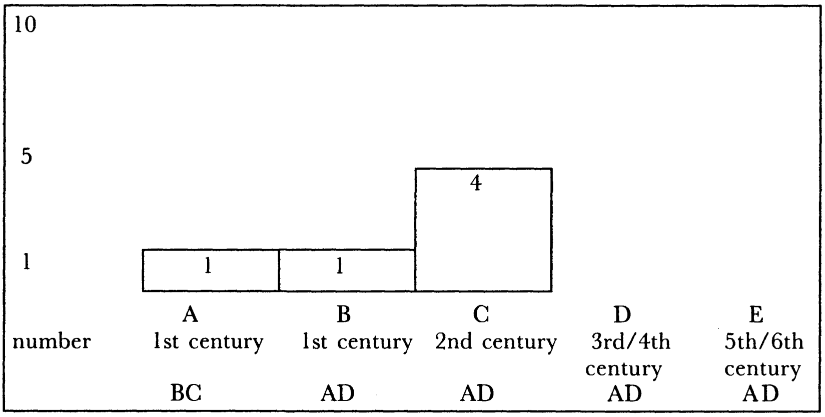

Diagram 3. Nilotic scenes in the other provinces of Italy (catalogue nos. 079-084), chronological distribution.

2.4 *North Africa*

The Roman territories in North Africa, where Nilotic scenes have been preserved from present-day Algeria to east of Libya, show a totally different chronological distribution (diagram 4). Nilotic scenes appear as late as the first century AD and even then only in modest numbers. More examples have survived from the second century AD, but most Nilotic landscapes occur in the third and fourth century AD. Two mosaics from Cyrenaica date from the sixth century AD and testify to the occurrence of Nile landscapes in Christian culture.

2.5 *Egypt*

The number of Nilotic scenes preserved in Egypt is too small to draw any conclusions. The fact that two of the three examples date to the first century BC, would fit in with the notion that Nilotic scenes

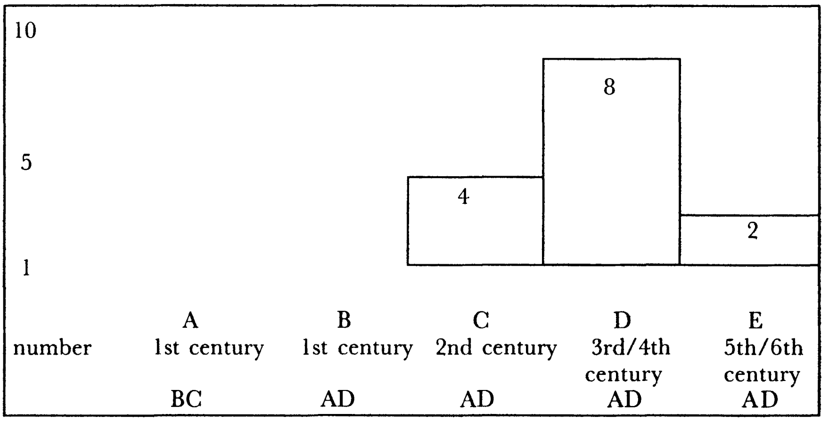

Diagram 4. Nilotic scenes in North Africa (catalogue nos. 085-098), chronological distribution.

were popular relatively earlier in Egypt than in other areas, as they may have had their origin in Egypt.

2.6 *European provinces*

Nineteen Nilotic landscapes are known from the European provinces of the Roman Empire; they occur from the first century BC until the fifth and sixth century AD but are most common in the first to fourth century AD (diagram 5). As this topographical category consists of a diverse number of cultural areas, the chronological distribution requires a brief elucidation. The example from the first century BC originates from Delos and is in the Hellenistic tradition; it is therefore connected with the Egyptian and Italian examples from the first century BC. The examples from the first century AD mainly stem from Gaul, while Nilotic scenes in Roman Spain were mainly popular in the third and fourth century AD.

2.7 *Near Eastern provinces*

Finally, the Roman provinces in the Near East show a totally different chronological distribution (diagram 6). Only one example dates from the fourth century AD, all other Nilotic landscapes date from the fifth and sixth century AD. In these two centuries the genre was relatively popular in the Near East; only a few single examples originate in this period from the other topographical areas.

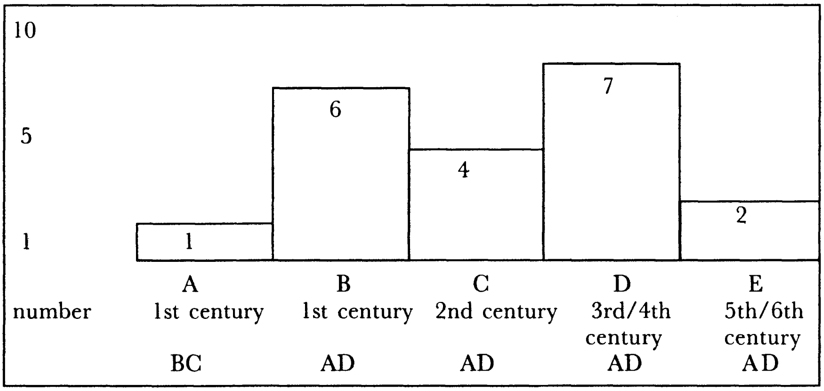

Diagram 5. Nilotic scenes in the European provinces (catalogue nos. 102-121), chronological distribution.

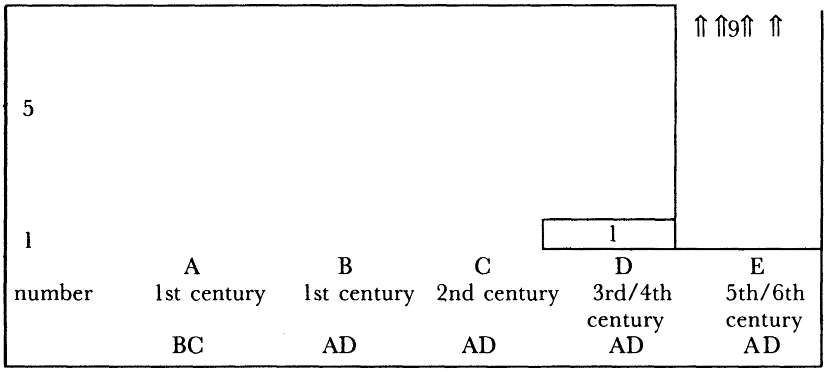

Diagram 6. Nilotic scenes in the Near East (catalogue nos. 122-131), chronological distribution.

2.8 *Conclusion*

Nilotic scenes occur at the end of the second and beginning of the first century BC in the eastern part of the Mediterranean area and in Italy. At the end of the first century BC the genre is still popular in Italy, at least in Rome and Pompeii. This popularity continues in the first century AD and spreads in that period also to some other parts of the Empire, mainly Gaul. The popularity of the genre reaches its apogee in Italy in the second century AD. In the third and fourth century AD, Nilotic scenes occur in particular in Roman Spain and the North African provinces, and hardly any longer in Italy. Adapted

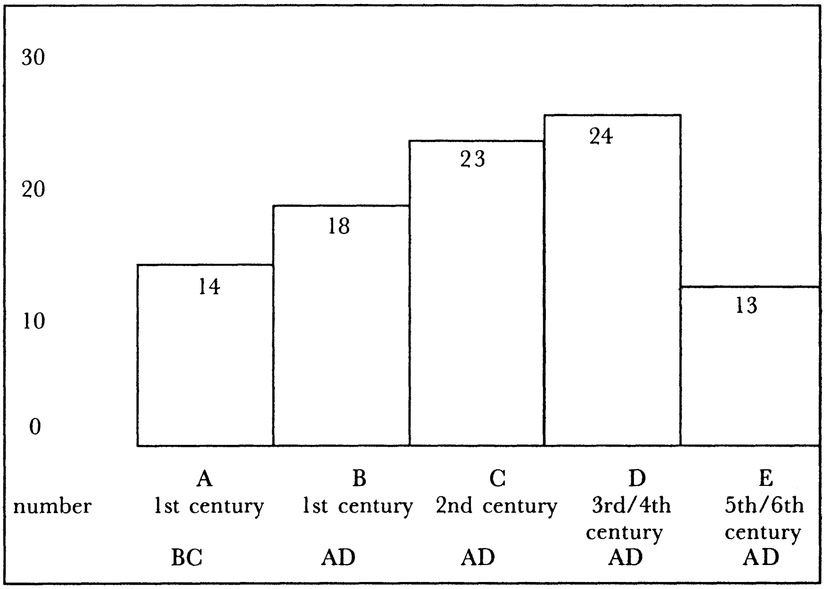

Diagram 7. Corpus Figurarum Niloticarum, chronological distribution without the Pompeiian Nilotic scenes (catalogue nos. 001-030 and 070-131).

to Christian iconography, Nilotic scenes in the fifth and sixth centuries are still popular only in the Near East (diagram 7).

As mentioned several times, in a statistical sense the large number of Nilotic scenes in Pompeii and surroundings has a heavily distorting effect. This is clearly shown in an overview of the chronological distribution of the total database, as represented in diagram 8: Nilotic scenes seem to occur most frequently in the first century AD.

This, however, does not fit in with the situation in other areas than Campania. In order to correct somewhat the obvious overrepresentation caused by the eruption of the Vesuvius in 79 AD, it was decided to exclude all Nilotic scenes from Pompeii (cat. nos. 031-069) from the overview. Nilotic landscapes from other towns covered by the Vesuvius have been included though, so that the information from Campania does clearly count but distorts less (at least less so). The chronological distribution thus created (diagram 7) seems to agree more with the information known from the various topographical areas.

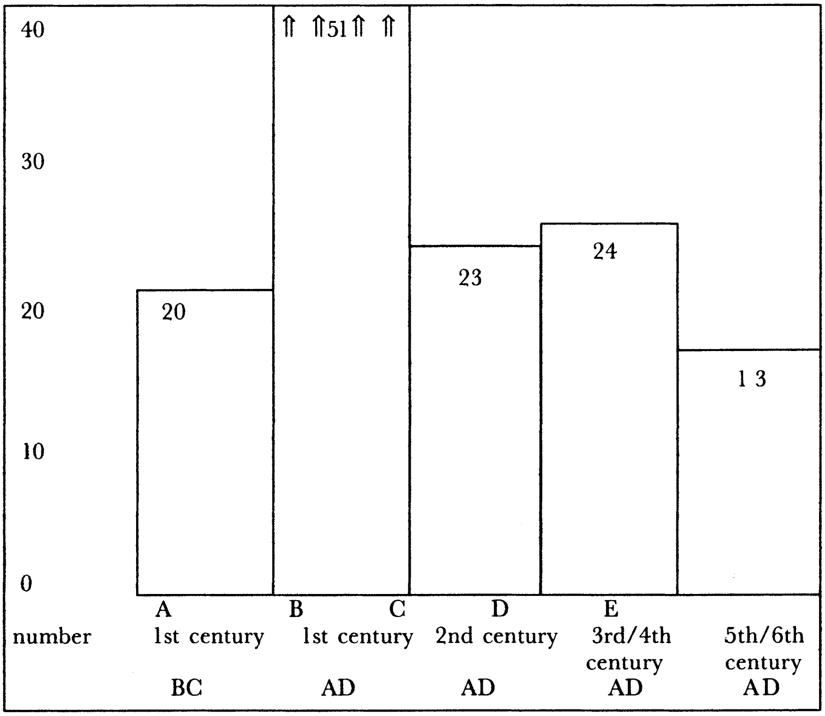

Diagram 8. Corpus Figurarum Niloticarum, chronological distribution (catalogue nos. 001-131)

3 *Contextual distribution*

In the reconstruction of the meaning of an image it is not only important *what* is depicted but also *where* the scene in question is situated. The latter question is the focus of this section. In order to reach an answer an overview will be given of the contexts of all catalogue numbers, insofar as they are known. After thus having acquired an overview of the contextual distribution, it will be necessary to examine the reconstructed contexts themselves. For instance, it will become clear that a large number of Nilotic scenes in houses and villae come from the gardens of these contexts. In order to better understand this location, it will be necessary to examine what the function of such an area was, as well as the meaning of the corresponding architectural decoration, and how the Nilotic scenes are related to this. The answers to these questions form the basis of the final reconstruction of the function, together with the iconographical and iconological analysis, which is the focus of the next section in order to answer the question of what is depicted[200].

3.1 *Contextual distribution by topographical area*

3.1.1 *Latium*

Table 3 shows the spread of the 27 Nilotic scenes from Latium over the various contexts. What is striking, when compared with other areas, is the relatively large number of examples from a funerary context.

Table 3. Nilotic scenes in Latium, Italy (catalogue nos. 001-027), contextual distribution.

context	1 public	2 private	3 religious	4 funerary	5 unknown
number (total=27)	2	6	5	7	7
%	7.4 %	22.2 %	18.5 %	25.9 %	25.9 %

3.1.2 *Campania*

The majority of Nilotic scenes in Campania originates from houses and villae (table 4). Contrary to Latium, the occurrence in a funerary context and in sanctuaries is limited.

Table 4. Nilotic scenes in Campania, Italy (catalogue nos. 028-078), contextual distribution.

context	1 public	2 private	3 religious	4 funerary	5 unknown
number (total=51)	3	37	2	1	8
%	5.9 %	72.5 %	3.9 %	2.0 %	15.7 %

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[200] It was decided to compare four different kinds of contexts in this analysis: public (public buildings), private (houses and villae), religious (temples and sanctuaries) and funerary (tombs). Such a division seems useful also on theoretical grounds. In the table belonging to every topographical area (cf. the seven tables at the end of the book), the final allocation to one of these categories can be found; in doubtful cases, the scene concerned was put in category 5 ('unknown'), in order to keep the reconstruction as true as possible.

3.1.3 *Other provinces in Italy*

In the other provinces in Italy, all Nilotic scenes with a known context (of the six contexts, only one is unknown) originate from houses and villae.

3.1.4 *North Africa*

In North Africa Nilotic scenes also mostly occur in houses and, in particular, in villae (table 5). A number of examples originates furthermore from public thermae. A funerary context is absent, the two Nilotic mosaics from a religious context come from Christian churches.

Table 5. Nilotic scenes in North Africa (catalogue nos. 085-098), contextual distribution.

context	1 public	2 private	3 religious	4 funerary	5 unknown
number (total=14)	4	6	2	–	2
%	28.6 %	42.8 %	14.3 %	–	14.3 %

3.1.5 *Egypt*

The exact origin and context of all three Egyptian Nilotic scenes is unknown.

3.1.6 *European provinces*

The general impression that Nilotic landscapes mainly occur in houses and villae is confirmed (table 6).

Table 6. Nilotic scenes in the European provinces (catalogue nos. 102-121), contextual distribution.

context	1 public	2 private	3 religious	4 funerary	5 unknown
number (total=20)	–	10	1	1	8
%	–	50 %	5 %	5 %	40 %

3.1.7 *Near Eastern provinces*

The context is unknown of half of the examples from the Near East (table 7). Of the scenes of which the origin is known, three decorated houses and villae.

Table 7. Nilotic scenes in the Near East (catalogue nos. 122-131), contextual distribution.

context	1 public	2 private	3 religious	4 funerary	5 unknown
number (total=10)	1	3	1	–	5
%	10 %	30 %	10 %	–	50 %

3.1.8 *Conclusion*

The original context of about three-quarters of the catalogue can be determined. As the following overview will show, Nilotic scenes mainly come from the private context of houses and villae (table 8). The examples of the genre from sanctuaries concern predominantly Christian churches. Nilotic landscapes also occur in public buildings, mainly in thermae. Nilotic scenes are least used as decoration in a funerary context.

Table 8. Corpus Figurarum Niloticarum, overview of the contextual distribution (catalogue nos. 001-131).

context	1 public	2 private	3 religious	4 funerary	5 unknown
number (total=131)	10	67	11	9	34
%	7.5 %	51.1 %	8.4 %	6.9 %	26.0 %

Even after elimination of the statistically distorting factor 'Pompeii', as was done with the chronological distribution in order to get a more realistic picture, houses and villae remain the context which the major part of the material belongs to (diagram 9).

3.2 *Further examination of the contexts*

To place back, as well as possible, the Nilotic scenes in their original context seems to be important for the final interpretation of the representations. Thus, for instance, the generally prevailing religious interpretation of the genre can be queried in advance on the grounds of the contextual distribution[201]. After all, Nilotic scenes seem to

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[201] Cf. more extensively *Versluys/Meyboom 2000.*

context	1 public	2 private	3 religious	4 funerary	5 unknown
number (total=92)	7	34	9	8	34
%	7.6 %	37.0 %	9.8 %	8.7 %	37.0 %

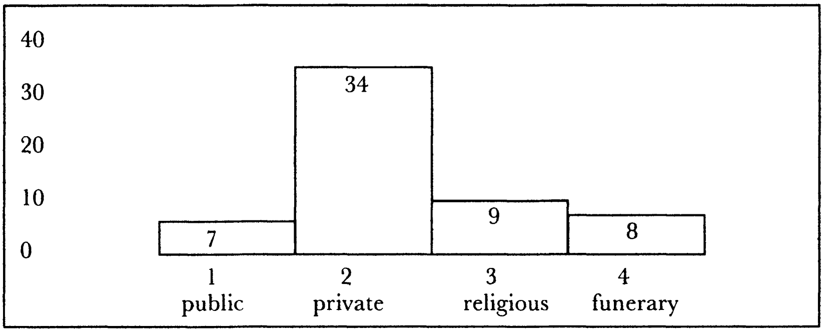

Diagram 9. Corpus Figurarum Niloticarum, contextual distribution and a graphical representation of the known contexts excluding the Pompeii material (catalogue nos. 001-030 and 070-131).

originate mainly from houses and villae, and generally there are no indications that these were inhabited by followers of the Egyptian cults. A reconstruction of the contexts as such, however, does not suffice for a better understanding; it is also necessary to look at the general character of the decoration of that particular context. For instance, in order to better understand the placing of a Nilotic scene in a tomb, it will be necessary to examine what kind of decoration usually adorned graves, what the intention of such a decoration was and how Nilotic scenes relate to this. The general character of the decoration of public buildings, houses and villae, sanctuaries and graves will therefore briefly be described below and investigated as to how far the Nilotic scenes fit into this picture.

3.2.1 *Nilotic scenes in public buildings*

The category 'public buildings' is of course far too wide for a reconstruction of the general character of the decoration. However, here we are dealing mainly with thermae and the definition of constants in decoration does seem possible there. Research into the decoration of private baths has shown that three themes are most commonly depicted or referred to: water, sport and the bath practice. These three subjects are all directly connected with the function and meaning of baths[202]. This principle also seems applicable to public baths. Nilotic landscapes seem thus primarily suitable as decoration of baths and thermae because they are waterscapes. Such a connection has been noted a number of times in a practical sense in the study of the contexts. Nilotic scenes are sometimes placed at the edge of the water of a bath or pond, with the result that the real water thus seemed to continue in the scene[203]. Nile mosaics were also used as decoration in nymphaea and other watergardens so that the waterscene was thus seen through a layer of real water, which must have provided a lively and amusing spectacle[204].

3.2.2 *Nilotic scenes in houses and villae*

Most Nilotic scenes come from the 'private' context of houses and villae. In the study of the general character and the meaning of the decoration of specific contexts, this category is the least unequivocal and the most complicated. In particular in Pompeii and Herculaneum, Roman houses have been found with wall and floor decorations preserved relatively complete. The study of these decorations concentrated at first on chronological and iconographical questions, and attempts were made to 'read' the decoration programme of a house from one underlying idea. Thus a personal explanation in particular was looked for in the placing of the pictures instead of emphasising the thematic relationship between area and decoration. The most important classical source with regard to architecture and architectural decoration (Vitruvius' *De Architectura*, VII-5) is very explicit in this respect: Vitruvius states that a specific kind of decoration was considered suitable for a specific kind of area[205]. In recent research the decoration is regarded in particular as a carrier of social meanings, where both the subject and the place in the house where the picture is located are indicators for the recontruction of the meaning. So the social structure of the Roman house is now also drawn into the interpretation of the decoration. This view, formulated as a coherent interpretation by Wallace-Hadrill, has in the meantime gathered such a large-scale following that a few brief indications should suffice here. One of the most important principles in the design and decoration of a Roman house was the social order. A first distinction was made between the family members and the slaves, in which the rooms for the former were richly decorated, while the quarters for the latter were made as invisible as possible both in architecture and in decoration. A second distinction, much more prevalent in archaeological practice, is the one between public areas and private rooms. A Roman house did not serve in the first instance to protect the inhabitants, as in our present society, but rather to present them. The atrium, the tablinum and to a certain extent also the peristyle were meant for the clientele and the uninvited guests. They had to be impressed with the grandeur of the architecture and the prominence of the decoration. Stately closed walls with marble imitation are therefore imminently suitable for atria. The tablinum and peristyle were a step further in intimacy. Around the peristyle are the rooms intended for the family, relatives and the invited friends. The decoration was adapted to these different functions and ranks[206].

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[202] Cf. N. de Haan, Dekoration und Funktion in den Privatbädern von Pompeji und Herculaneum, in: *Moormann 1993*, 34-37 and, eadem, Nam nihil melius esse quam sine turba lavari. Privatbäder in den Vesuvstädten, *MededRom* 56 (1997) 205-226.

[203] Cf., for instance, cat. nos. 015, 032, 035, 055, and 056.

[204] Cf., for instance, cat. nos. 003, 006, 052, and 081.

[205] Cf. for an extensive discussion of this text and the archaeological implications *Tybout 1989*, 55-107 (Vitruv über Wandmalerei).

However, the determination of the social order of an area on its own is nowhere near to explaining the presence of its decoration and function; usually other factors also play a part. Private, richly decorated rooms around the peristyle, all meant for the intimi and important guests, had very different functions and decorations. The intention and background of such rooms and in particular the accompanying decoration should therefore also be studied. Zanker's work is of great importance in this respect. He demonstrated for instance that an attempt was made in the private, richly decorated outer and inner gardens of Pompeian houses to copy the ideal of the villa on a smaller scale; a valuable conclusion for a better understanding of the various forms of decoration found in such rooms[207]. Riggsby has attempted to determine the 'function' of the cubiculum. He distinguishes a number of 'patterns of association' with regard to this area in the Roman perception. In the case of the cubiculum these are: relaxation, sexuality, adultery, impressing through art, murder and suicide, and the receiving of guests. These associations seem to provide a greater and especially a more specific insight into the choice of the decoration than the determination of the social order and function[208]. With respect to the relation between area and the meaning of depictions of (episodes of) myths, also in Muth's monograph it is shown that, in a strict sense, a distinction between public and private is untenable. Thus for instance, scenes by her interpreted as erotic motifs not only occur in private rooms, as to be expected, but also in public areas. Muth also observes that representations can sometimes emphasise the more private character of public areas and vice versa. It is therefore rather the 'atmosphärische Qualität' of an area that determines the choice of a specific kind of decoration[209]. Of course, the rough distinction private/public does again play a role here.

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[206] *Wallace-Hadrill 1994*, 3-61 (originally: The social structure of the Roman house, *BSR* 56 (1988) 43-97). Other important (archaeological) publications which brought to notice the significance of the social structure of the Roman house are Y. Thébert, Vie privée et architecture domestique en Afrique romaine, in: P. Veyne (ed.), *L'histoire de la vie privée* I. *De l'Empire romain à l'an mil* (1985) 303-397; *Gazda 1991*; *Clarke 1991*; *Allison 1992*; *Moormann 1993*; *Tybout 1993* and *Zanker 1995*. For an overview and critique of Roman wall-painting and social significance see now *Tybout 2001*, with notes 2, 4 and 6 for more recent literature on the theme as well. In all, the 'private' of this context is disputable and the indication was therefore put between inverted commas at the beginning of the section.

In order to get a better general understanding of the function and meaning of Nilotic scenes in houses and villae, it will therefore be necessary to examine their distribution over the different areas in the light of the theoretical backgrounds sketched above[210]. Pompeii provides a good opportunity for this, as the exact origin can be determined of a large part of the Nilotic scenes preserved in the houses of this town. This group consists of 35 Nilotic landscapes, located in 30 houses and villae. Their occurrence in the various rooms of the house is represented in the following table:

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[207] Cf. *Zanker 1979* and *Zanker 1995*.

[208] A.M. Riggsby, 'Public' and 'private' in Roman culture: the case of the cubiculum, *JRA* 10 (1997) 36-55. The joint core of these associations leads eventually to a reconstruction of the 'function': "the core of the house and a special symbol of the domestic; a place of greater secrecy".

[209] Cf. *Muth 1998*, 264 for a summary of her view; see also *Zanker 1999*.

[210] A problem there is that the backgrounds just formulated apply in particular to a small number of large town houses, having so many rooms that a division of functions and the introduction of levels of intimacy was possible. These houses belonged to an elite and are only a small part of the total number. Yet many houses not belonging to this category show the same underlying principle in construction and furnishing, and they therefore probably also can be interpreted from the same background. D. Corlàita Scagliarini (Spazio e decorazione nella pitture pompeiana, *Palladio* 24-26 (1974-1976) 3-44) made a distinction with modest houses between static and dynamic rooms, to which, mutatis mutandis, the same kind of principles seem to apply. See *Tybout 2001*, 48-49 for this problem in general; he suggests a difference between the earlier periods and the period of the Fourth Style in this respect.

Table 9. Distribution of 35 Pompeian Nilotic scenes over the different rooms of 30 houses and villae.

cat. no.	atrium	tablinum	peristyle	triclinium/ oecus	garden/ viridarium	bath
031		X				
032						X
033					X	
034				X		
035					X	
036	X					
037				X		
038				X		
039					X	
040					X	
041			X			
042			X		X	
043					X	
045					X	
046		X				
047				X		
048				X		
050			X		X	
051		X			X	
052					X	
054					X	
056					X	
057					X	
059			X			
060			X			
062				X		
063	X					
064				X		
065					X	X
067	X	X				
35	3	4	5	7	14	2

Nilotic scenes do not occur in areas meant for slaves but are always located in richly decorated rooms. Almost 15% decorate peristylia. More than half of the scenes (60 %) comes from the more private rooms around and behind the peristyle: triclinia, oeci, and (inside) gardens. It is noticeable that relatively the largest part of the Pompeian Nilotic scenes originates from gardens.

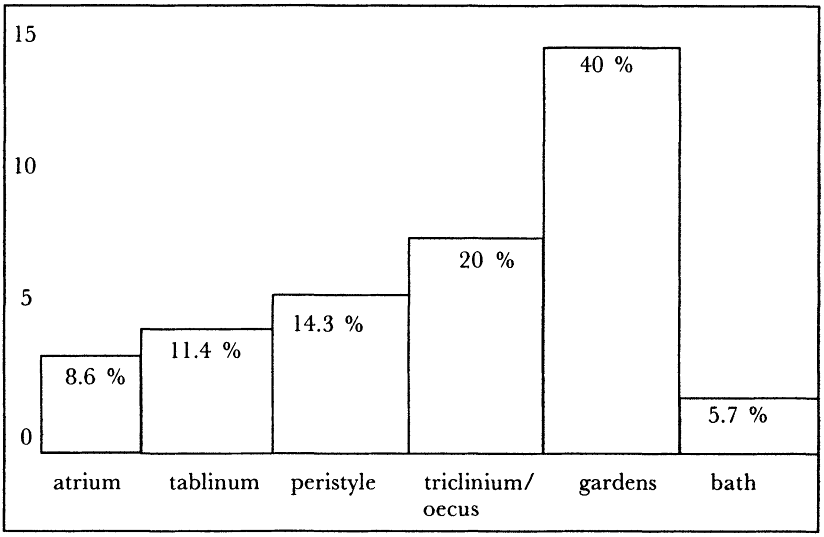

Diagram 10. Nilotic scenes in Pompeian houses, overview of the contextual distribution.

One aspect of the meaning of gardens has already been mentioned: an attempt was made to imitate the rural villa with its corresponding way of life on a small scale. The meaning of gardens in Roman society was however much more complex[211].

Roman gardens could have a religious character and were originally not only associated with various gods (amongst others Venus and Pomona), but also regarded as sacred themselves. In a practical sense gardens and parks were important recreation areas in which, apart from vegetation and trees, a cooling watergarden was one of the set elements. The decoration of gardens obviously arose for a large part from this function and, simplifyingly summarising the very heterogeneous way of furnishing, it could be argued that these are all associated with the *otium* notion. People wanted to relax pleasantly, whether this was done by scholarly contemplation of Greek statues erected there or in a more mundane fashion. It is therefore not surprising that precisely Dionysos and Dionysiac themes frequently occur as decorations of gardens and recreation areas in general[212]. However, the meaning of these images of and about the god do not seem always to be specifically religious: a statue of Dionysos in a garden rather seems to point generally to the *otium* notion than to the cult of the god in a specific sense. "Il y a donc, dans les jardins, toute une zone indécise entre ce qui est religieux et ce qui n'est plus que banal (–)", as Grimal already concluded[213].

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[211] A summary of the Pompeiian gardens can be found in *Jashemski 1979* and *Jashemski 1993*. For a study into their meaning I found *Grimal 1984* and *Neudecker 1988* most useful.

The comparison with Dionysiac themes seems to clarify the placing of Nilotic scenes in gardens. They were also regarded as *truphe* or abundance motifs, and amongst other things for that reason would have been put so often specifically in gardens and in recreation areas in general. One reason why Nilotic scenes would have been popular specifically in gardens, as one of the various recreation areas in a Roman house, is perhaps a practical one. As Grimal correctly emphasises, the presence of water in Roman gardens is fundamental[214]. Especially in Nilotic scenes water plays a large part and they in particular would therefore have been considered appropriate as decoration of gardens. This practical application has been mentioned in several cases: the Casa dell'Efebo/di P. Cornelius Tages (cat. no. 035), where the water in the garden could continue in the water of the representation, the Casa del Granduca (cat. no. 052) where water of the fountain was collected in a basin decorated with a Nilotic landscape, the many Nilotic landscapes decorating nymphea, etc. As already observed in the occurrence of Nilotic scenes in thermae, it thus seems that also the association between a well-watered environment and a representation abounding in water plays a role in a more general sense[215].

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[212] See however the observations made by R. Ling, The decoration of Roman triclinia, in: O. Murray, M. Tecusan (eds.), *In Vino Veritas* (1995) 239-251.

[213] *Grimal 1984*, 338.

[214] *Grimal 1984*, 295-301. The peristyle of the Casa dei Vettii in Pompeii, e.g., had 14 fountains.

[215] Hence also the occurrence of Nilotic landscapes on impluvia, as in Pompeii IX 5, 14-16 (cat. no. 063). For a recently discovered impluvium in S. Maria Capua Vetere "con i bordi rivestiti da mosaico figurato con sogetti di derivazione nilotica", cf. S. De Caro, Le rassegne archeologichi da Campania, in: *Atti Magna Grecia* 36/1996 (1997/98) 410-414, 414 with tav. XI.

3.2.3 *Nilotic scenes in sanctuaries*

At first sight to define the general character of the decoration of sanctuaries seems a superfluous exercise: after all, a religious context presumes a religious decoration. Nevertheless, this is only partly true and very different principles also play a part in the foundation, building, furnishing and functioning of a sanctuary. The most important principle there is usually power and the representation of the ruler or the person who paid for the building of the sanctuary, which is shown in the sanctuary and the decoration[216].

A succinct example of the various associations which can thus surround the decoration of a religious context, is the so-called obelisk of Domitian, now adorning Piazza Navona. This obelisk, originating from Egypt, was placed, by order of Domitian, in the centre of the inner court of the sanctuary of Isis on the Campus Martius in Rome. This sanctuary had been restored by him after a fire. The obelisk was in ancient Egypt part of the sun cult but was also associated with various other gods, amongst whom Isis. The meaning of the object in this context should therefore be explained primarily as religious. However, Domitian, the builder, presenting himself as a divine pharaoh on a very visible object in the centre of a sanctuary, thus underlines his position of power. The monument therefore also indicates imperial propaganda. In the third place, the re-erected Egyptian obelisks in Rome generally emphasise Egypt's subordination to the Roman victor; hence this aspect was also expressed in the courtyard of the Iseum Campense. And finally, the Roman visitor or passerby would also have looked at the exotic object with a cultural, tourist-like interest[217]. The interpretation of the decoration of a cultic context can therefore be very ambiguous.

A second reservation ensues from the polytheistic and eclectic character of Roman religion. A sanctuary was not the exclusive domain of the central god in his or her purest form: all kinds of connections and associations were possible. In the Iseum in Pompeii, for instance, statues of Dionysos and Venus were also found. This does not automatically mean that also Osiris-Dionysos was worshipped in the sanctuary; apparently a marble statue of a non-Egyptian god was a suitable votive offering for Isis. A case in point in this respect is that some paintings in the Iseum in Pompeii are similar to paintings in houses of that period[218].

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[216] Probably R. Bianchi Bandinelli's, *Roma. Il centro del potere* (1969) has been most influential in these respects. See further *Zanker 1987* and N. Hannestad, *Roman art and imperial policy* (1988).

[217] For this obelisk see *Iversen 1968*, 76-92; *Lembke 1994*, 210-212 sv. 55 and Ch. IV 2.5.4.

Nilotic scenes appearing in sanctuaries of Egyptian gods seem to illustrate in the first place the beneficent power of these gods. This also applies to Nilotic scenes in Christian churches. In that case the Nilotic landscapes are part of a depiction of pastoral life and the fertility associated with it, a theme popular in Christian churches for various reasons[219]. The two dwarf landscapes which decorated the porticus of the temple of Isis in Pompeii are however so general and inconspicuous that they were probably not meant to represent 'the sacred country of Isis'. Their presence can rather be explained by association and the popularity of the genre. This popularity of egyptianising dwarf scenes in Pompeii after AD 62 would certainly have played a role in the placing of Nilotic scenes in the temple of Apollo there. It does not seem necessary to look for a religious association to explain the their presence; they simply seem to be examples of a fashion; applied because they were stockfigures in the painter's repertoire.

3.2.4 *Nilotic scenes in funerary contexts*

In every society death is surrounded by ritual. This implies that the visual language which is used around dying and death is meaningful and refers to the notions and representations about death of the society concerned. Roman tomb decorations have also been interpreted from this notion. Generally, the representations are then seen as meaningful symbols and allegories of life and death[220].

A number of Nilotic scenes on sarcophagi should perhaps be explained in this manner. The hereafter is frequently represented, as

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[218] Cf. *Alla ricerca di Iside*, 23-39 (La decorazione pittorica), 36. For the furnishing cf. 63-66, sv. 3.7 and 3.8 for the statues of Dionysos and Venus.

[219] Cf. *Balty 1995*.

[220] Most important are (still) F. Cumont, *Recherches sur le symbolisme funéraire des Romains* (1942, 2nd edition 1966); *Andreae 1963* and F. Matz, *Die dionysischen Sarkophage*, I-IV (1968-1975). A striking characterisation of (and warning concerning) this allegorical interpretation is given by *Brendel 1979*, 186: "Thus the stories represented on the sculpted sarcophagi of the second and third centuries A.D. can hardly fail to evoke the thought of dead, and certainly often did so. (–) The difficulty in modern studies of such possible associations arises from the danger of overinterpretation, which allegory invites by its nature". See most recently on this subject *Feraudi-Gruénais 2001*, who examines the interior decorations of tombs in imperial Rome.

Andreae has tried to show, as a sea with 'islands of the blessed', surrounded by erotes, psychai and marine animals[221]. Such representations show many similarities iconographically with Nilotic scenes and it is therefore not surprising that the Roman scenes are now and then egyptianised: there are now palm trees growing on the banks and crocodiles swimming in the water. It is not clear what this says about the buried person. On the one hand, it is possible that the person had some kind of relationship with Egypt, the buried one was Egyptian or an adherent to the Egyptian cults; on the other hand, it is possible that Romans, without any connection with Egypt, had their hereafter depicted as the beatific Canopus[222].

For obvious reasons, Nilotic scenes in a funerary context in general may perhaps be explained as a symbol of revival. They then seem to suggest the notion of the deceased taking part in the regeneration of nature or, less sophisticated, refer to the blissfull state in which one hoped the deceased to be. If the Nilotic scene in question shows macrophallic pygmies one must seriously consider the possibility that also the apotropaic function of these images had a role to play[223].

In an incidental case it is also possible that a Nilotic landscape contains references to the life of the deceased: the dwarves in the Nilotic scene in the grave of Vestorius Priscus in Pompeii could, according to Mols and Moormann, refer to the feasts with dwarves that the deceased held during his life[224].

4 *An inventory of the elements depicted and their meaning*

After a discussion of the contexts, an attempt will be made in this section to discover *what* the Nilotic landscapes show and which meaning the classical observer may have ascribed to such representations. It is therefore necessary to make an inventory of all elements occurring in the scenes and to discuss these. Based on the relationship between the different elements and their meaning it will then be possible to discuss the meaning of the genre as a whole[225].

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[221] *Andreae 1963.*

[222] The image of Canopus in the Roman world as a place of entertainment without sorrows forms an appropriate interpretation of the blissful condition which one thought and hoped to find in the hereafter. *Turcan 1966*, 588 f. thus interprets the Nilotic scenes on sarcophagi from the third century AD as references to "les félicités du Canope".

[223] See, summarising for this aspect in general, *Clarke 1998*, 130-134.

[224] Cf. cat. no. 069.

4.1 *The landscape*

The landscape is present in all Nilotic scenes and forms the key element in the definition. In particular in the first century BC, the Nilotic scene thus becomes a landscape painting with an Egyptian character. More often however, especially from the second century AD onwards, the landscape element is only reproduced schematically and indicates the environment in which a scene is set.

4.1.1 *The flood*

All Nilotic landscapes intend to show Egypt along the Nile and in particular during the flood of the river. This is shown not only in the reproduction of the landscape but also, as will be argued later, in the plants, animals and activities typical for the flood period. The Nile flood was a unique and spectacular phenomenon in the classical Mediterranean world: while everywhere the land was dry and infertile and all rivers had reached their lowest level, the Nile flooded and thereby created a period of feast and abundance in Egypt. Countless classical authors therefore mention the Nile flood and some give a description of Egypt during this period[226]. Most illustrative is an extract from Book II by Herodotos[227]. In the more extensive examples of the genre, it is clear that an attempt was made to depict this situation[228]. In less extensive examples (small paintings, emblemata, reliefs, etc.), this aspect was more difficult to depict and often only a smaller volume of water suggesting the flood is visible. Frequently also only a lotus flower, hallmark of the flood, indicates that the scene should be imagined as amid the rising waters of the Nile.

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[225] This method to reconstruct to a degree as high as possible the meaning of depictions of past societies was developed by the German cultural-historian Warburg and was refined by and became known through Panofsky. The best introduction to the method is still the latter's *Studies in Iconology* (1962). The importance of Warburg was generally somewhat underestimated but is recently again strongly emphasised; Warburg's work is therefore now republished: *Aby Warburg. Gesammelte Schriften: Studienausgabe* (Hrsg. H. Bredekamp, M. Diers, u.a.) I. *Sämtliche zu Lebenszeiten veröffentlichte Schriften* (1998), other volumes will be following. The previous edition is from 1932: G. Bing, *Aby Warburg. Gesammelte Schriften*, I/II (1932). A good impression of Warburg's opinions can be gained from E.H. Gombrich, *Aby Warburg. An intellectual biography* (2nd edition, 1986); D. Wuttke (ed.), *Aby M. Warburg. Ausgewählte Schriften und Würdigungen* (2nd edition, 1980); H. Bredekamp (ed.), *Aby Warburg. Akten des internationalen Symposions Hamburg 1990* (1991); F. Reijnders, *Kunst—Geschiedenis, verschijnen en verdwijnen* (1984) 98-112 ("Herstel en terugkeer van de kunstgeschiedenis II. Aby Warburg") and R. Brilliant, Winckelmann and Warburg. Contrasting attitudes toward the instrumental authority of ancient art, in: A. Payne, A. Kuttner, R. Smick (eds.), *Antiquity and its interpreters* (2000) 269-275. Cf. for bibliographical backgrounds now R. Chernow, *The Warburgs. The 20th century Odyssey of a remarkable jewish family* (1993). Warburg underwent a development in his thinking from art historian to cultural historian, in which a stay with the Hopi Indians in America played a large role. Subsequently, he tried to see the European history of art more from an antropological perspective, from which a form of cultural history originated which seems to have great potential as a theoretical framework for classical archaeology. *Schama 1995*, 230, in his accurate summary of Warburg's range of thought (228-233), even refers to him as a cultural-archaeologist.

4.1.2 *Flora*

The lotus is the most prevalent plant in Nilotic landscapes. When the Nile flood reached its peak, the many lotus seeds transported in the silt of the river would germinate. The period of the Nile flood was therefore accompanied by huge quantities of flowering lotus plants covering the water; they thus formed the first sign of the general revival of the vegetation brought about by the flood. When the water retreated the plants slowly died. It is thus logical that the lotus was strongly associated with the period of the flood[229]. The traditional, indigenous Egyptian variety of the lotus is the white and blue water lily. However, in Nilotic scenes the Indian lotus (*Nelumbo nucifera*) is usually depicted, which occurs in Egypt from the first millennium

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[226] Many authors also tried to find an explanation of the phenomenon. See for a practical overview of all speculations most recently R. French, *Ancient natural history. Histories of nature* (1994) 110-113. This problem was to be solved only in the 19th century when the English explorer John Hanning Speke was the first European to see in 1858 the huge expanse of water which he called Lake Victoria and identified as the source of the Nile. All ancient texts concerning the Nile flood have been collected in *Stricker 1956* (partly) and *Bonneau 1964*.

[227] Herodotos II, 97. Some of the 19th century prints and drawings by David Roberts picture this image, which had remained unchanged for millennia, until the construction of the Aswan dams in the 20th century. Cf. *Egypt and Nubia from drawings made on the spot by David Roberts with historical descriptions by W. Brockedon, lithographed by L. Haghe* I-III (1846-1849); the most recent edition was prepared by F. Bourbon, *Yesterday and today Egypt. Lithographs and diaries by David Roberts, R.A.* (1996).

[228] Cat. nos. 006, 014, 025, 035, 061, 062, 066, and 067 for instance show large expanses of water above which here and there pieces of land arise.

[229] In ancient Egypt, the lotus was therefore also the symbol of the Nile god Hapi. Also in the Roman period, the gods connected with the flood, such as Isis and Osiris, carry the lotus flower as attribute, see for instance cat. no. 043. Cf. *LÄ* sv. Flora; M.M. El-Saghir, *The papyrus and the lotus in ancient Egyptian civilization* (1985, arabian text with English summary) and *Meyboom 1995*, III n. 105.

BC. In Nilotic scenes from the first century BC, the plant is usually depicted with great detail and accuracy; for instance, the mosaic from the Casa del Fauno in Pompeii (cat. no. 047) shows the different flowering stages. In later pictures there is usually no realistic reproduction. The lotus flower and leaf are however easily recognised by their particular shape.

Other (water) plants are frequently depicted as well. These seem to indicate the marshy environment along the river. Specific kinds of flowers and plants can rarely be distinguished[230].

The most prevalent tree in Nilotic landscapes is the palm tree, usually a date palm, which was and is the most common palm tree in Egypt. In two cases a doum palm is depicted, much less general and recognisable by its forked trunk[231]. The palm tree is a characteristic symbol of Africa in general and Egypt in particular[232].

Other vegetation is often less specific in character and hence difficult to identify. An exception are the easily recognisable cypress trees. Even till today these evergreen trees can be found near graves in the Mediterranean world. In Nilotic scenes they are part of the sacred wood surrounding the grave of Osiris, the source of the Nile flood. This also applies to the, much less often depicted, sycamore, a tree that occurred quite frequently in Egypt[233].

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[230] It does seem that in a number of cases (cat. nos. 002, 008, 013, and 075), based on the very detailed representation, a specific plant or flower is meant. Cat. nos. 052 and 089 probably show part of the papyrus marshes which lined the Nile until the 19th century; to this applies also the adjective *papyrifer* which Ovid, *Metamorphoses* XV, 753 uses in connection with the Nile.

[231] Cat. nos 006 and 025. For the palm in general cf. *LÄ* sv. Palme and *Meyboom 1995*, III n. 79. In some twenty Nilotic scenes palms are clearly visible.

[232] Also, for instance, on the Roman victory coins struck after the battle near Actium, the palm is depicted as a symbol of Egypt. Cf. *Bellen 1991* for examples and further Ch. I n. 9. For the Roman (symbolical) depiction of Africa in general, cf. the overview of F. Salcedo, *Africa. Iconografia de una provincia Romana* (1996). Until the 19th century the palm is a stereotypical element in European allegories of Africa, together with the lion and the primitive Black.

[233] For the cypress and the sycamore cf. *LÄ* sv. Zypresse and Sykomore, and *Meyboom 1995*, III n. 154. For the grave of Osiris in Nilotic scenes see section 4.4.1.1. Here we see again that the detailed Nilotic scenes from the first century BC accurately depict a number of bushes and trees; something that seems no longer the case from the first century AD onwards. For instance, a large number of trees and bushes in the Nile mosaic of Palestrina (cat. no. 006) seems easy to identify. In cat. no. 028 it seems that cypresses are clearly depicted. The fact that the Roman observer associated the cypress with death is confirmed, for instance, by two extracts from Virgil's *Aeneid* : IV, 215-220 and IV, 505-510.

4.1.3 *Fauna*

Four animals are stereotypical in the representation of Nilotic fauna: crocodile, hippopotamus, duck and ibis. In some pictures from the first century BC, the accurate rendering of Egyptian animals still seems to play an important role and some diversity is visible. From the first century AD however mainly the above four animals are depicted stereotypically, and sometimes even (very) clumsily, to indicate an Egyptian environment[234].

The crocodile (*Crocodilus Niloticus*) occurred throughout Egypt, not only in the Nile but also in the many canals and lakes. The attitude of the Egyptians towards this highly dangerous animal for man and beast was equivocal: on the one hand it was pursued and hunted, on the other it was regarded as sacred and was worshipped. From the Republican period the animal forms wellnigh the personification of the land of the Nile for the Romans. Elaborate descriptions of this, in the classical world typical Egyptian, animal appear from Herodotos onwards; a real crocodile could probably for the first time be seen in Rome during the games of Scaurus in 59 BC[235].

The hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*) has always been another pre-eminent symbol of Egypt and there was extensive mythologisation around the animal. The not totally accurate description by Herodotos was followed for a long time, indicating that few had seen the animal close up[236]. The huge animal, that lived in herds, was a danger to the harvest which could be eaten or trampled on by a herd. In the Roman period, the hippopotamus had already retreated to behind the cataracts and only occurred in a few oases and places in the delta.

Ducks are regular inhabitants of the reed-covered banks of the Nile. They are not specifically Egyptian but their occurrence is typical for the Nile valley, which was used by them on their migration to the overwintering areas in Central Africa. Ducks were hunted by the Egyptians for food and for offering. Perhaps the artist sometimes meant to depict the so-called nile-geese which are typically Egyptian[237]. A notable motif is the pair of ducks, of which the first duck looks backward. This backward-looking duck has a long tradition in Egyptian art which continues via the Hellenistic period to Roman times[238].

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[234] For Egyptian fauna in general cf. J. Boessneck, *Die Tierwelt des Alten Ägypten* (1986) and the recent overview of P.F. Houlihan, *The animal world of the Pharaohs* (1996) in which in particular 'Ch. V: The waters of the Nile' is important in this respect. All animals discussed can easily be found in these overviews; therefore these publications are not referred to in the footnotes every time an animal is mentioned.

[235] In some seventy Nilotic scenes a crocodile is depicted; it is therefore the most frequently occurring animal in Nilotic landscapes. Cf. *LÄ* sv. Krokodil and *Meyboom 1995*, III n. 116. Cassius Dio (55.10.8) mentions that already during games in the second century BC scores of crocodiles were shown in a pond in the Circus Maximus.

[236] Herodotos II, 71. Hippopotami are represented in some forty Nilotic scenes. For the animal in general cf. *LÄ* sv. Nilpferd and *Meyboom 1995*, III n. 114.

The ibis was a sacred bird in Egypt; the animal was associated with Thoth and had a special meaning. In summer, when the Nile flooded, the bird migrated from the South to Egypt in order to nest there and was therefore regarded as the bearer of fertility; as such it was protected and worshipped. The ibis was therefore not hunted and could create large breeding colonies. There are different varieties but the black and white ibis (*Threskiornis aethiopicus*) was the most common and is usually depicted in Nilotic landscapes. Large quantities of ibises, present everywhere on or around the Nile, are therefore a typical feature of the period of the flood[239].

As mentioned before, in particular in the first century BC, other animals also occur in Nilotic landscapes. In the upper half of the Nile mosaic from Palestrina, a large number of Ethiopian animals are represented, often in detail and accurately. As this does not occur in any of the other Nilotic scenes, these animals will not be discussed separately[240]. In a few cases a donkey or a cow is depicted, which is grabbed by a crocodile surfacing from the water. According to Pliny this motif goes back to a (lost) painting by the Greek painter Nealkes. In the time of Ptolemy III, Nealkes painted a sea battle between Egyptians and Persians, and, in order to show that this battle took place on the flooded Nile and not at sea, he added a donkey to the edge of the water which was grabbed by a crocodile. Apparently this was recognised as typically Egyptian. In late antique Nilotic scenes, the donkey is sometimes replaced by a cow[241]. Donkeys also occur in less threatening situations in Nilotic landscapes and are then usually depicted with a burden on their backs and with a guide. This refers perhaps to the transportation of grain, which was an important activity at the beginning of the period of the flood[242]. Cattle also occur more often in Nilotic landscapes. In Isis' environment it is obvious to interpret a cow as Hathor and a bull as Apis, but cattle are also depicted without a religious meaning[243].

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[237] Cf. *LÄ* sv. Ente; *Meyboom 1995*, III n. 117 and *Tammisto 1997*, index sv. ducks. Ducks can be seen in some fifty Nilotic landscapes.

[238] Cf. A. Hermann, Das Motiv der Ente mit zurückgewandtem Kopfe im ägyptischen Kunstgewerbe, *ZÄS* 68 (1932) 86-105 and for a recently published example *Hölbl 1999*, 363-364 with Abb. 28.

[239] For reasons unknown, the bird had already nearly completely disappeared from Egypt in the 19th century. Ibises are depicted in some twenty Nilotic scenes. For the bird in general cf. *LÄ* sv. Ibis and *Meyboom 1995*, III n. 98.

[240] In various respects the lower half of the Nile mosaic of Palestrina fits in more closely with the genre of the Nilotic scenes in general. For a discussion of the animals in the upper half of the mosaic cf. *Meyboom 1995*, 43-50. There are two Nilotic scenes which also show a number of different animals than the species that will be discussed later: the frieze from the Casa di Ma. Castricius in Pompeii (cat. no. 054) and the mosaic from Sepphoris (cat. no. 130). In the latter, a lion is attacking a cow, felines are hunting antelopes, and a bear is fighting a wild boar. This depiction is in the tradition of the Roman *paradeisos*, which are frequently combined with Nile landscapes, at least in the first century AD. The report of the excavator of the villa in Beit Jibrin (cat. no. 126) mentions a mosaic with an elephant. However, it is uncertain whether this part of the representation also had a Nilotic character; elephants do not otherwise occur in Nilotic scenes.

The Nile mosaic from the Casa del Fauno in Pompeii (cat. no.

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[241] Pliny, *N.H.* 35, 142. The motif is discussed by *Alföldi-Rosenbaum 1984* in her presentation of two 6th century AD Nile mosaics in Cyrenaica (cat. nos. 097 and 098) in which a cow is grabbed. As further examples, she advances a painting from Herculaneum (cat. no. 72, in reality originating from the villa di San Marco in Stabiae, now MN 8512, it seems however that we are dealing here with a donkey); the Nile mosaic from El Alia, now in Sousse (cat. no. 086, which also concerns a donkey); the relief from Székesfehèvar (cat. no. 114, in which a donkey and his guide are taken); the mosaic from the so-called house of Kyrios Leontis in Beth Shean (cat. no. 125, it concerns a cow here), and a representation in relief in the church of the St. Catherine monastery in the Sinaï (cf. appendix no. 34). To be added: a wall-painting from the Casa della Caccia Antica in Pompeii (cat. no. 51, in which a donkey is shown), and a 6th century AD mosaic from Hadita (cat. no. 128) in which a cow grabbed by a crocodile can be reconstructed with certainty. On the basis of the examples given the following development can be reconstructed. An animal being devoured by a crocodile is a subject that was also frequently depicted in Pharaonic Egypt. Probably amongst other things via the Hellenistic painting of Nealkes, this motif was adopted in Roman Nilotic landscapes, in which the donkey was replaced by a cow in the 5th and 6th century AD. See also *Cappel 1994*, 73-77.

[242] For this interpretation cf. Versluys 2000, 248-249 with n. 53. Cf., for instance, cat. nos. 079 and 082. The donkey was also in general the beast of burden par excellence in ancient Egypt, cf. *LÄ* sv. Esel.

[243] For the Apis bull in Nilotic landscapes, cf. cat. no. 009; see for cattle in Nile landscapes cat. nos. 015 and 117. Of the cattle in one of the landscapes in the ekklesiaterion of the Isis temple in Pompeii (cat. no 061e) we may assume, on the basis of the function of the room, that they had religious connotations for the observer. In ancient Egypt, cattle formed an important group of domesticated animals; they were used in agriculture, as sacrificial animal, and they supplied milk, meat, etc. Cattle were mainly kept in the delta. Cf. *LÄ* sv. Rind.

047) shows a cobra and an ichneumon facing each other in a hostile manner. Also in later Nilotic scenes the ichneumon is depicted a few times. This typical Egyptian animal, also indicated as 'pharaoh rat', was valued as a mouse and snake catcher[244]. There is also a series of representations in which a cobra and an ichneumon are facing each other hostily, outside the context of Nilotic landscapes[245]. Snakes also occur separately in Nilotic scenes and are then sometimes depicted fighting other Nilotic animals[246].

Some twenty Nilotic scenes show fish, that have returned in large numbers with the rising water[247]. Both Diodorus and Plutarch mention in their version of the myth of Isis and Osiris that the vital parts of Osiris, thrown into the Nile by Seth, were eaten by a pike and a sea bream. In particular the bream thus became the herald of the revival and he appears in the Nile at the beginning of the flood as a "self-sent messenger (–) who announces to a happy population the rising of the river"[248]. It is conceivable that the depiction of fish in Nilotic scenes originally refers to this belief and thereby underlines the character of the representation as a flood scene. The many water birds occurring in Nilotic scenes also fit the well-watered environment. Sometimes it seems as if cranes are meant to be depicted; only in a few cases can specific bird species be determined[249]. In a number of cases a dog has been depicted[250]. A painted frieze in the Casa di Livia on the Palatine in Rome (cat. no. 017) shows a dromedary[251]. On a grave painting from Ostia a lion is perhaps associated with a Nilotic context[252]. Occasionally animals such as dolphins, crabs, tortoises, lobsters, frogs and other water reptiles are also depicted. These are not necessarily typically Egyptian but usually seem to have been added to the Nile landscape in their capacity as water animal[253].

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[244] Cf. *LÄ* sv. Ichneumon and cat. nos. 015, 026, 075 and 111. The ichneumon could be worshipped.

[245] For this motif cf. *Meyboom 1995*, III n. 47, with all previous literature. Also on terracotta-lamps the motif was frequently used, see appendix no. 01-10.

[246] Cf., for instance, cat. nos. 002, 003, 056, 065, 081, 094, 109, 115, 122, 127 and 130. There were many different kinds of snakes in Egypt, cf. *LÄ* sv. Schlange. The theme of a snake fighting a bird also occurs more generally in the ancient world, see for this the articles by E.P. De Loos-Dietz, Un échassier avec un serpent, *BABesch* 66 (1991) 133-144 and eadem, Le thème de l'échassier avec un serpent reconsideré, *BABesch* 68 (1993) 121-128. The meaning of this kind of representation would, according to the author, be apotropaic.

[247] Cf. *LÄ* sv. Fische, profan; *Meyboom 1995*, III n. 194 and the useful overview by D. Sahrhage, *Fischfang und Fischkult im alten Ägypten* (1998). In some cases the fish might be further identified: for instance in the Nile mosaic of Palestina (cat. no. 006) perhaps a Nileperch is depicted (cf. *Meyboom 1995*, III n. 118).

[248] Cf. Schama 1995, 278-279.

[249] Cranes, which are associated with Egypt and Ethiopia in general by their mythical battle with pygmies, can perhaps be recognised in cat. nos. 082, 103, 104, 105, 106, 124 and 129. Cf. in general *LÄ* sv. Vogel, with references to separately discussed species, in which in particular the category 'Stelzvögel' is important. Two detailed mosaics from the first century BC (cat. nos. 008 and 013) show specific species of birds; cat. nos. 015 and 022 show a strange kind of raven(?); cat. no. 043 shows, amongst other things, a peacock. A fragment of a mosaic from

4.2 *Buildings and means of transport*

The depiction of the flood of the Nile provided the opportunity to depict life on and around the river. Large Nilotic scenes, such as the Nile mosaic of Palestrina (cat. no. 006), show extensively and in

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Hellenistic Egypt (cat. no 101) shows the hoopoe, a common bird all around the Mediterranean. Cat. no. 117 shows a starling and various flamingos. The mosaic in the church of Et-Tábgha in Palaestina (cat. no. 127) shows a Nilotic scene inhabited by local bird species; only the Nilometer and the lotuses are typically Egyptian here. The most important publication in this field is *Tammisto 1997*, in which a number of Nilotic scenes with birds is discussed and to which is referred here for further information.

[250] Cf. cat. nos. 035, 042, 051, 075, 086 and *LÄ* sv. Hunde. Dogs generally occurred as domesticated animals. Perhaps the occurrence of dogs in Nilotic scenes can also be connected with a remark by Aelian, cf. *Meyboom 1995*, III n. 75.

[251] In Roman art, of the sub-species of the camels, mainly the dromedary (*Camelos arabicus*) is depicted. The animal underlines the exotic environment in this context. For camels in Antiquity cf. K. Schauenberg, Die Cameliden im Altertum, *BJb* 155 (1955) 59-94.

[252] Cf. cat. no. 005. The question is to what extent the, not completely preserved, painting was meant as a whole; for instance, compared with the crocodile, the lion is rather out of proportion. On the basis of the preserved fragment, however, it is not illogical to interpret the foreground as the Nile marshes and the background as the corresponding riverbank. In the enigmatic painting from the Casa di Ma. Castricius in Pompeii (cat. no. 054), a lion is also depicted. Lions commonly occurred in North Africa and could already be seen in Italian amphitheatres in the second century BC. There was a connection between the Nile and the lion specifically, as the word for 'flood' could be depicted with the hieroglyphal sign 'lion' (*Stricker 1956*, 8); however, it does not seem likely that the presence of lions in Nile landscapes should be explained in this specific way.

[253] Cf. cat. nos. 069, 105, and 107 (dolphins), 016 and 107 (crab), 002 (tortoise), 116 (lobsters), 075, 081, and 082 (frogs and reptiles). Seneca tells about a fight between crocodiles and dolphins in the estuary of the Nile (the dolphins have the upper hand by ripping open the stomachs of the reptiles with their dorsal fins), but it seems very unlikely that this association, whether it is true or not, plays a role. For the meaning of frogs and the distribution of this Egyptian theme cf. J. Leclant, La grenouille d'éternité des pays du Nil au monde Méditerranéen, in: *Hommages Vermaseren* II, 561-572.

different variations, the buildings, means of transport and the population with their specific activities. In later Nilotic scenes of a more moderate character only stereotypic elements remain of these. In order to understand the placing and original meaning of these elements, it is therefore necessary to investigate earlier representations. This becomes obvious in the depiction of the different buildings, monuments and boats.

4.2.1 *Sanctuaries*

With the exception of the Nile mosaic of Palestrina (cat. no. 006), no temple in the traditional Egyptian style ever occurs[254]. The sanctuaries in Nilotic scenes are much more modest and usually consist of small, prostyle temples in a Hellenistic style, sometimes enclosed by high walls and surrounded by towerhouses. Such sanctuaries commonly occurred in Egypt and the Hellenistic-Roman East. The towerhouses served as accommodation for the priests and the temple staff. In reality they were not typically Egyptian but they were clearly considered as such by the Romans[255]. Sanctuaries in a smaller form are the semicircular niches in which statues of gods were placed. They also commonly occurred in Egypt and are thus depicted in the Nilotic landscapes. The statue of the god can only be recognised in one single case, while in a number of cases these statues do not seem to have anything more than a basic shape[256]. Perhaps these are images of the so-called Osiris mummies. During the Khoiak festival, which accompanied the Nile flood, a doll, shaped like an Osiris mummy and made of clay and grain, was left to sprout. The rebirth of nature as a result of the Nile flood was thus symbolised. Afterwards the reborn mummy was placed in a small chapel where it could be worshipped. A small chapel with a reborn Osiris mummy is therefore a typical element of Egypt during the flood of the Nile[257].

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[254] Cf. section 11 of the Nile mosaic of Palestrina, perhaps to be identified as the Osiris temple in Canopus, *Meyboom 1995*, 53-55.

[255] For the representations of this kind of sanctuary cf., for instance, cat. nos. 034, 053, 062 and 066. For the towerhouses see *Meyboom 1995*, III n. 88 with previous literature.

[256] Cf., for instance, cat. nos. 035, 049, and 086.

[257] For this custom cf. *LÄ* sv. Kornosiris and M.J. Raven, Corn-Mummies, *OMRO* 63 (1982) 7-38; for the suggestion that this would have been depicted in Nilotic scenes see *Meyboom 1995*, 63.

4.2.2 *Nilometers*

The Nilometer is a typical Egyptian monument that moreover is strongly associated with the Nile flood. Nilometers could be part of Egyptian temples; they were connected to the river and made it possible to read the water level and thus also the progress of the flood. Nilometers usually consist of a square or round well in which it was possible to descend via steps to read the water level[258]. In the Nile mosaic of Palestrina (cat. no. 006), a Nilometer has the shape of a round well. In a number of other Nilotic scenes, a base with a pointed pillar is depicted on which the different heights are recorded. Probably Nilometers were thus rendered in a simplified manner or they are examples of a more simple type[259]. This kind of Nilometer is depicted in several Nilotic scenes[260]. Sometimes numbers indicate the level of the rise. A flood of 16 yards was considered ideal: a successful harvest was thus guaranteed, while the water did not rise to such a level that irrigation systems and villages flooded.

4.2.3 *Houses and villae*

Part of the Egyptian population lived in mud huts with a thatched roof and these are frequently represented in Nilotic landscapes. It is notable that these kinds of huts are sometimes depicted with a pergola on the roof proper[261]. Evidently this form of habitation was associated with dwarves and pygmies; this kind of accommodation occurs in particular in images in which Egyptians are depicted as such. In a number of cases larger houses of mudbricks are depicted; the towerhouses for priests mentioned earlier are part of this group.

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[258] Cf. *LÄ* sv. Nilmesser; *Wild 1981*, 25 ff. and *Meyboom 1995*, III n. 77 (with previous literature).

[259] One can imagine these kinds of pillars or steles to have been present everywhere in Egypt at the borders of the river. Thus every village could monitor the flood and see the level to which the water had risen. These, much more primitive, Nilometers are however not attested. We do know of inscriptions on rocks at the water, seemingly indicating the water level, cf. *LÄ* sv. Nilstandsmarken.

[260] Cat. nos. 018, 078, 091, 104, 115, 125, 127 and 130. The late-antique examples from the Near East sometimes even show a height of 17 yards, see for this group *Hachlili 1998*, 110-111 with fig. 6, who also adds a mosaic from Umm al-Manabi depicting a Nilometer.

[261] Cf., for instance, cat. nos. 011, 052, 053, 055, 062, 066, and 071. The occurrence of a reed hut with a crookedly shaped roof, as shown in a mosaic from El Alia (cat. no. 086), is exceptional. This kind of portable straw shelters put up in the field for a short period have been identified as *mapalia*, well-known from ancient texts and used till now, but not typically Egyptian.

A number of Nilotic scenes from the first century AD shows towers which are connected by a kind of footbridge[262]. Certainly during the period of the flood, people reposed in improvised accommodation at the edge of the water, under a pergola or an awning[263]. Of a totally different character are the villae depicted at the edge of the water. Stories about Canopus and the villae at the edge of the river there were famous in the Roman period and it is possible that the observer associated them with it. It seems more likely though that also the Hellenised delta in general was indicated by the villae[264]. A striking element are the villa-like structures with long porticoes at the edge of the water[265]. Of course these long colonnades are a frequently occurring, originally Hellenistic element in Roman landscape paintings and also such a type of building is to be expected in complexes on the water's edge[266]. In Nilotic landscapes, however, the porticoes are clearly connected with the vegetation often lying behind it[267]. Because, as will be shown in the next section, a sacred wood on the edge of the Nile represents the grave of Osiris, we may perhaps interpret the gardens surrounded by porticoes at the water in a similar way[268].

4.2.4 *Tombs*

The tomb of Osiris, called *abaton* by the Greeks, is depicted a number of times in Nilotic landscapes. As, according to the myth, the tomb of Osiris was the source of the Nile flood, such a depiction can be expected in Nilotic scenes. The tomb would be located in a sacred wood and as such, a burial chapel among trees and vegetation, it is depicted in Nile landscapes. The trees around the grave symbolise the life-giving power of the god risen from the dead. There were burial chapels for Osiris all over Egypt, but from the Hellenistic period the island of Bigeh, near the temple of Isis on Philae at the first cataract, became the place where the most important *abaton* was situated[269]. Common tombs, however, were also often located in gardens and were then also associated with the tomb of Osiris. As the Nile flood, originally the real subject and later the background of the Nilotic landscapes, is strongly associated with Osiris, it may be assumed that the depiction of burial chapels and kiosks among cypress trees, sycamores or other vegetation, were meant to represent the grave of Osiris or that, in any case, in origin they referred to it[270].

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[262] Cat. nos. 014 and 053 for instance. In general Nilotic landscapes from the first century BC show huts while examples from the first century AD also show mudbrick accommodations, see *Rauch 1999*, 252.

[263] Cf., for instance, cat. nos. 006, 030, 035, 059, 062, 067, 071, 072 and 100.

[264] Cf., for instance, cat. no. 019.

[265] Cf., for instance, cat. no. 086.

[266] As in the Italian villae maritimae, the idea was to profit optimally from the view and the coolness.

[267] For support of this observation cf. *Grimal 1984*, 231-235 and 256-259 (258: "Il est, en effet, un mode d'union privilégié entre l'architecture et le jardin").

[268] In particular when they contain typical tomb trees such as cypresses and sycamores. Such an interpretation could be contemplated in cat. no. 036. Cat. no. 029 clearly shows towers connected by walls. Behind them, however, large lotus flowers have been depicted and not trees which could indicate the grave of Osiris. Note also that the large villa estates along the Nile in the surroundings of Alexandria had family graves on their property. These, however, were also identified with the grave of Osiris because the deceased was being associated with the god.

4.2.5 *Boats*

Papyrus canoes (*cannae*) and small wooden boats are typical means of transport of the Egyptian population. In particular the papyrus canoe, the most frequently used means of transport on the Nile, and also employed intensively in the catching of fish, has been regularly depicted in Nile landscapes[271]. The papyrus canoe could also have a religious connotation, connected with the flood: when Isis is searching for the scattered body parts of Osiris, she travels in a papyrus canoe through the Nile marshes. For that reason one is believed to be safe from the crocodiles in the Nile in a papyrus canoe: for fear of the goddess, they do not dare to attack these boats. Also the *horeia*, a small rowing-boat, occurs regularly in Nilotic landscapes[272]. Other simple means of transport over water are the raft and (a number of tied together) amphorae[273]. Boats with a mast and a cabin are a different type; they seem to be associated with the delta and the Hellenised population. It concerns here large papyrus canoes or wooden boats, meant for luxury transport of passengers on the Nile (the *cercurus*) or transport of merchandise[274]. In one or two cases a galley is depicted. Perhaps the river police or the guard troops of Upper Egypt were meant to be depicted this way[275].

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[269] For the tomb of Osiris and the religious ceremonies which took place round the burial of the deity in the month of Khoiak, known to us from a text on the temple of Hathor in Dendera, cf. É. Chassinat, *Le mystère d'Osiris au mois de Khoiak* I, II (1966-1968); *LÄ* sv. Abaton and sv. Osirisgrab and *Meyboom 1995*, 60-64 with corresponding notes. All information on the chapel of Osiris in the temple of Hathor in Dendera became recently available in the monograph of S. Cauville, *Dendera. Les chapelles osiriennes*, I, II (1997).

[270] In the following Nilotic scenes, we are without doubt dealing with the tomb of Osiris: cat. nos. 017, 028, 033, 035, 045, 053 and 059.

[271] Cf. *LÄ* sv. Papyrusboot and *Meyboom 1995*, III n. 194. Papyrus canoes are depicted in, for instance, cat. nos. 004, 008, 020, 034, 035, 037, 051, 055, 060, 062, 095 and 101.

[272] See, e.g., cat. nos. 005 and 050.

4.3 *The population*

Nilotic scenes usually seem to show the land of the Nile flood in the Hellenistic period, if they may, of course, be regarded as realistic representations of Egypt. In not a single picture is a Roman evidently being depicted. In the Hellenistic period, the two main population groups in Egypt were the indigenous Egyptians and the originally Greek upper class. Both groups occur. Furthermore, from the period around 30 BC, the inhabitants of Egypt are often depicted as dwarves and pygmies.

4.3.1 *Egyptians*

The Egyptians in Nilotic scenes are depicted as humble country folk. In simple clothes they are engaged in the transportation of grain or other agricultural products, characteristic activities for the period of the flood, or they are celebrating the flood festivities. In a number of scenes with a religious character, Egyptians are portrayed as priests, having a shaven head and wearing characteristic clothes[276].

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[273] Cf. cat. no. 019 for the depiction of a raft. The depiction of a dwarf or pygmy on an amphora with a sail tied to it, seems to refer to the transport with amphorae or in terracotta boats, cf. cat. nos. 020 and 059. Both Strabo (17, 4) and Juvenal (*Satire* XV, 126-128) mention this Egyptian custom, cf. J.P. Cèbe, Un thème de l'iconographie nilotique: le pygmée sur l'amphore, *EtClAix* 2 (1967) 163-171 and *Cappel 1994*, 63-64.

[274] This kind of boat is depicted, for instance, in cat. nos. 001, 007, 008, 013, 028, 034, 037, 062, 067, 071, 079, and 102.

[275] Cf. for instance cat. no. 059. It often remains unclear exactly what kind of vessel it was intended to depict; smaller boats are visible in cat. nos. 005, 096, 107, larger boats in cat. nos. 012, 022, 023, 024, 083 and 089. The yellow frieze in the Casa di Livia in Rome (cat. no. 017) shows different kinds of boat. See, in general and also for the names of the different types, *LÄ* sv. Schiff; *Cappel 1994*, 81-82; *Meyboom 1995*, III n. 112 and *Pekáry 1999* (with further references).

[276] Cf. for instance cat. nos. 009, 013 and 061.

4.3.2 *Greeks*

The Greek inhabitants of Egypt can be distinguished from the Egyptians by their dress; a number of women, for instance, are clearly recognisable by the typical Greek chiton. Furthermore, they are never seen in the countryside but always near temples or villae[277].

4.3.3 *Dwarves and pygmies*

Dwarves are people with a pathological disorder, which can be recognised by a relatively small body growth, combined with the occurrence of relatively large heads, wide hips and pronounced buttocks[278].

In Antiquity there seems to have been a relatively large number of dwarves in Egypt[279]. Dwarves were popular with the Romans as slaves and entertainers. Julia, the daughter of Octavian, had two dwarves, called Canopas and Andromeda, and also other wealthy families had 'house dwarves', who thus sometimes came from Egypt. However, also another association, namely with pygmies, seems to explain their occurrence in Nilotic scenes. Pygmies are by nature very small negroid people. Homer already mentions their existence in Aethiopia, at the source of the Nile, as did Herodotos[280]. Pygmies were therefore associated with the Nile and in the first instance it is thus quite understandable why the Romans sometimes depicted the inhabitants of Egypt as such in the exotic Nilotic landscapes. Depictions of pygmies fighting cranes already existed for a long time in the classical world: the earliest preserved representation can be found on the foot of the François vase (c. 575 BC), and in Etruria a 'tomba dei Pigmei' has been preserved[281]. The much longer existing (iconographic) theme of small people fighting large birds, logically associated with Egypt, thus becomes part of the Nilotic scenes.

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[277] In Egypt, there was a large number of Greek soldiers who had been given a piece of land by way of thanks for services rendered and who had settled there: the clerurchs. It is however likely that not this specific group was meant to be depicted, but more generally the Hellenised upper class living in the delta. Cf. N. Lewis, *Greeks in Ptolemaic Egypt* (1986) and *Meyboom 1995*, III n. 205.

[278] The medical expression for this disorder is achondroplasia, cf. V. Dasen, *Dwarves in ancient Egypt and Greece* (1993) Ch. 1: Medical context.

[279] Cf. *Meyboom 1995*, 150 with references.

[280] Homer, *Iliad* III, 2-6 and Herodotos II, 32 ("little men, smaller than normal people"). The Greek *pygmaioi* means "fist-sized people". See further *LIMC* sv. pygmaioi (V. Dasen) and *Cappel 1994*, esp. 4-10 for these and other literary sources.

[281] Cf. *Cappel 1994*, 11-25 and *Meyboom 1995*, III n. 17 for further examples and references.

Perhaps a role was played here, and in the portrayal of pygmies in general, by a painting mentioned by Philostratos, which would show the battle between Heracles and the pygmies[282].

It seems unlikely that a Roman artist would have been aware of the subtle difference between dwarves and pygmies and their environments; he had probably never seen real pygmies. Generally pygmies have a dark skin in Nilotic scenes and are depicted naked or scantily clad; dwarves have a lighter skin colour and usually wear Greek clothes. It seems, however, that here again the difference is indicated between indigenous Egyptians (fighting crocodiles and hippopotami) and the Greek population of the delta (walking near temples and villae). A Roman artist would generally have imagined an Egyptian to be a small man with a dark skin, and it seemed to elude him whether he meant a pygmy or a dwarf. In fights with cranes and other Nilotic fauna, for example, pygmies should in fact be depicted; however, what is shown are small people with symptoms of achondroplasia. The portrayal of dwarves and pygmies in Nilotic scenes is thus mingled and it seems that only rarely one of either categories is consciously depicted. It is therefore preferable to indicate Egyptians depicted as small people, either black or white, as dwarves (the most general name), and to speak of pygmies only when small, obviously negroid people are depicted without symptoms of achondroplasia in an environment suitable to them. To underline the understandable Roman ignorance, in this book the indications 'dwarf' and 'pygmy' are used quite randomly to indicate small people; also to prevent an impression of precision that does not seem to have existed.

There is yet another association through which dwarves and pygmies would fit well in the context of the life-giving Nile flood: they were a symbol of sexual potency and fertility[283]. Probably also for this reason dwarves are regularly depicted ityphallically or macrophallically in Nilotic scenes.

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[282] *Imagines* 2, 22. See for the text, translation and a commentary O. Schönberger (ed.), *Philostratos. Die Bilder* (1968) 241-243 sv. 22, 448-450. Cf. also *Cappel 1994*, 9.

[283] Cf. *LÄ* sv. Zwerg and *Meyboom 1995*, 152-154 ("in every way they emphasize the ideology of the truphe", 153-154). In ancient Egypt the dwarf god Bes also had such a meaning which is illustrated by a first century BC relief showing a dancing Bes depicted macrophalliccally (cf. E.M. Moormann, *Ancient sculpture in the Allard Pierson Museum, Amsterdam* (2000) 113 sv. 137). Note that this dancing pose reminds of the Casa dello Scultore paintings (cat. no 060). For examples of macrophallic pygmies in a Nilotic context see further appendix nos. 29 and 54.

Noticeable is the characteristic headgear sometimes worn by dwarves: round hats, inverted lotus leaves or pointed hats[284]. In approximately 75 Nilotic scenes the inhabitants of Egypt are depicted as dwarves or pygmies. The occurrence of putti or psychai in Nilotic scenes should probably be explained from the assocation with the also small dwarves and pygmies[285].

4.3.4 *Others*

In a number of Nilotic scenes women are depicted, who are generally interpreted as nymphs. Stricker mentions a Nile festival, in Pharaonic Egypt, where priests would have handed over children to the nymphs. If this association existed, it may initially perhaps have played a role. This should be further investigated, in which inquiry should be included also the role of nymphs in the Roman world in general[286].

A number of times a woman in a voile is depicted on a couch, usually seen from the back[287]. Based on a number of parallels from the Hellenistic and Roman periods, gathered and discussed by Jentel, it can be concluded that the Tyche of Alexandria is indicated[288]. By the Romans this figure was perhaps conceived as (a form of) Isis. More in general such a reclining figure will probably have reminded the Roman viewer of the symposia taking place along the Nile, in Canopus or elsewhere.

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[284] For illustrations cf. cat. nos. 082 and 104 (round hats), 089 and 095 (inverted lotus leaves) and 051, 059, 087, 102, 107, 110 (pointed hats). Round hats and lotus leaves are commonly used in Egypt as head covering (*Versluys 2000*, 241). The pointed hats can perhaps be explained by an association with the *cinaedoi*; actors and artists in Italy who were often of Egyptian origin. Already from the time of the old comedy was the pointed hat associated with clowns and jokers, cf. A. Maiuri, Due singolari dipinti pompeiani, *RM* 60-61 (1953-1954) 88-99.

[285] Cf. cat. nos. 012, 022, 023, 024 (all sarcophagi found near Rome), 091 and 130.

[286] Cf. *Stricker 1956*, 8 (without a reference to sources) for the connection between nymphs and the flood of the Nile. Because of the limited and not dominant occurrence of nymphs in Nilotic scenes, we will not go further into this issue here. See L. Kákosy, The Nile, Euthenia and the nymphs, *JEA* 68 (1982) and for nymphs in decorations in general J.P. Darmon, *Nymfarum Domus. Les pavements de la maison des nymphes à Néapolis (Nabeul, Tunisie) et leur lecture* (1980), not to be consulted without the critique summarised and articulated in *Muth 1998*, 376-380 sv. A 23.

[287] Cf. cat. nos. 027, 075 and 078.

[288] M.O. Jentel, Isis ou la tyché d'Alexandrie?, in: *Hommages Vermaseren* II, 539-560.

4.4 *Activities*

Nilotic landscapes thus show Egyptians, often depicted as dwarves, and the (originally) Greek population of the country, on and at the banks of the flooded Nile, amongst typical Egyptian plants, animals, houses, other buildings and boats. What are they doing, which activities are depicted?

4.4.1 *Rituals*

The Nile flood was, in particular from the Hellenistic period onwards, strongly associated with the myth of Isis and Osiris, which will be summarised here briefly. The story tells how the pharaoh Osiris is killed by his brother Seth, the representative of evil. Seth cuts the body into pieces and has these dispersed throughout Egypt. Osiris' wife, Isis, takes great pains to retrieve all body parts of her husband. When she has succeeded, she re-unites the different pieces, mummifies them and she, in the shape of a falcon, mates with her husband. After this mummification, Osiris is resurrected as the god of the underworld, while Isis gives birth to their son Horus, the falcon-god and the new pharaoh. This myth is a symbolic representation of the Nile flood. When the grieving Isis is looking for the body parts of her husband, the Nile is dry and Egypt is plagued by aridity and dryness. Isis finding the body parts of Osiris floating in the water, represents the arrival of the new Nile water. In the subsequent flood, Osiris represents the water of the Nile that washes over Isis, the land of Egypt, thereby making her fertile. The regrowth of the vegetation as a result of the Nile flood is symbolised by the resurrection of Osiris[289].

The myth of Isis and Osiris thus symbolises the Nile flood and many elements in Nilotic scenes, typical for the period of the flood, are therefore also connected with the gods. Examples have already been given several times: the lotus flower as indication of the regrowth of the vegetation, as well as symbol of Isis and Osiris; fish as heralds of the arrival of the new water, as well as bearers of the fertile seed of Osiris, etc. Not these religious associations, however, but the rituals concerning the Nile flood and the myth of Isis and Osiris, will be the focus in this section.

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[289] Cf. *LÄ* sv. Isis and Osiris. Detailed information on both gods and the myth as symbolical representation of the Nile flood can be found in Plutarch's *De Iside et Osiride*, in particular paragraph 38, in which the equation between Osiris and the water of the Nile and Isis and the land inundated by the Nile is explained. Plutarch's treatise is the most important source concerning the cult of Isis and Osiris in the Graeco-Roman period, cf. J. Gwyn Griffith, *Plutarch's De Iside et Osiride, edited with an introduction, translation and commentary* (1970). An excellent summary of the myths and rites round Osiris and Isis, as well as their meanings (still) can be found in J. Frazer, *The golden bough. A history of myth and religion* (abridged volume, 1922) Ch. 38-42. Note that this version of the myth already seems to be a corrupted one, prevailing in the Graeco-Roman period. Originally the symbolic representation of the Nile flood was (still) more complex and heterogeneous.

4.4.1.1 The burial of Osiris

The interment in the *abaton* of the ritual mummy of Osiris is only depicted in the Nile mosaic of Palestrina (cat. no. 006). A number of other scenes perhaps shows people offering to the so-called Corn Osirises, which were erected everywhere in small chapels[290].

4.4.1.2 Rituals around the Nile flood

The beginning of the flood was an important event that was accompanied by festivities and celebrations. Another important moment was reached when the water had risen to such a level that a successful harvest could be predicted with great certainty[291]. This good news spread rapidly over the whole country. In the Roman period this was symbolised by the figure of Semasia, a young woman on a galloping horse holding a palm in her hand. Galloping horsemen occur a few times in Nilotic scenes, sometimes clearly with a palm in their hands, and seem to refer to this[292].

Also sometimes depicted in a symbolic way is the rising of the water to the ideal level of 16 yards[293]. On that day a procession of priests went from the temples to the bank of the flooded river, where the high priest filled the ritual vase for the holy Nile water, the hydreion, with the new water and brought it back to the temple. The hydreion occurs a few times in Nilotic scenes[294].

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[290] For the interpretation of section 16 of the Nile mosaic of Palestrina as a procession of priests with the ritual sarcophagus in the direction of the tomb of Osiris cf. *Meyboom 1995*, 55-60. See for a critique on this opinion the review of M. Malaise and also F. Burkhalter, La mosaïque nilotique de Palestrina et les *pharaonica* d'Alexandrie, *Topoi* 9/1 (1999) 229-260 who sees the scene as a depiction of "la fête des Pamylies" in front of the Alexandrian Serapeum; the priests would carry a phallus. For the Corn Osiris see section 4.2.1.

[291] For the festivities and rituals in general cf. *Bonneau 1964*; D. Bonneau, Les fêtes de la crue du Nil, problèmes de lieux, de dates et d'organisation, *RdE* 23 (1973) 49 ff. and *Meyboom 1995*, Appendix 12 with further references and a critique of Bonneau.

[292] Cf. for instance cat. nos. 093, 126, and 130.

[293] This level was indicated on the Nilometers with a special symbol, the *semeion*, and the associated ceremonies were therefore, at least in the Roman period, called the *Semasia*, as was the personification already mentioned. Cf. cat. nos. 115 and 130 and *Meyboom 1995*, 72-73 with IV n. 179.

Perhaps one of the three fragments of a mosaic from Republican Rome, showing two persons looking like Dionysos and Ariadne on a quadriga along the water, (cat. no. 025) can also be associated with a ritual, not handed down to us, from this period at the beginning of the flood[295].

At the peak of the flood offers were made to the river Nile herself. Usually this consisted of throwing offerings into the water. Occasionally an unmanned boat filled with offerings was sent onto the river. Himerius, an author from the fourth century AD, seems to refer to this custom, when in his 14th oration he mentions a *muriophoros holkas*, a boat loaded with amphorae as votive offerings sailing on the Nile during the flood. Such an offering is perhaps referred to in a mosaic from El Alia (cat. no. 086); the occurrence of boats with (remarkably many) amphorae in Nilotic scenes in general can perhaps be seen partly as a reference to this kind of offerings[296]. In general, of course, they will also have referred to the Nile as Egypt's main transport route.

The Nile god, the personification of the river, is depicted in a number of Nilotic scenes. His presence underlines the Nilotic context and is therefore in its proper place, while also referring to the Nile in a ritual sense[297].

The feeding of crocodiles by priests is depicted twice. In some areas of Egypt, crocodiles were regarded as sacred animals and were therefore looked after and fed. Thus, the phenomenon is typically Egyptian, but cannot be associated directly with the Nile flood[298].

4.4.1.3 The hunting of crocodiles and hippopotami

Crocodiles and hippopotami were generally regarded as malicious animals, that could cause much damage to man and animal. At the beginning of the flood, a ritual slaughter of the animals by the pharaoh could take place. The crocodiles and hippopotami represented the malicious power of Seth, who was thus killed by Horus. The killing of hippopotami in this sense was also part of a temple ritual that took, amongst others, place in the temple of Horus in Edfu. There the hippopotami were killed in the pond of the temple while the pharaoh looked on. The animals were then butchered and presented to the gods as votive offerings. The killing of the animals will certainly also have occurred outside these specific occasions by others than the pharaoh. The battle between the inhabitants of Egypt and the hippopotami and crocodiles can therefore be associated specifically with the flood, but it is also a more general, typically Egyptian phenomenon[299]. This also applies to the hunting of birds living in the marshes along the Nile. This was a favourite pastime of the Egyptians, which could also have the symbolic function of driving out evil[300].

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[294] Cf. for instance cat. nos. 061 and 071.

[295] Cf. *Versluys 2000*, 241-247.

[296] Himerius, XIV (*'In Aegyptium advenam'*). For these offerings in general cf. *LÄ* sv. Nilopfer.

[297] Cf. cat. nos. 009, 012, 091, 106, 119, 125 and 130. Only in the mosaic of the Villa del Nilo near Lepcis Magna (cat. no. 091) is the Nile god the focus of the representation.

[298] Cf. cat. nos. 009 and 013. The Egyptian worship of animals struck the Romans and they denounced it in total incomprehension, cf. Ch. V 3.2.

One of the festivities to celebrate the dedication of the Mars Ultor temple in Rome in 2 BC was the hunt of 36 crocodiles staged in the flooded Circus Flaminius[301]. Besides fun in a Pharaonic tradition, the crocodiles seem to have represented the conquered Egypt on this occasion. It seems, however, unlikely that this contemporary association played a role.

4.4.2 *The flood festivities*

When a satisfactory flood occurred, a time of *otium* arrived in Egypt. The existence for the near future had been safeguarded by the flood and the subsequent successful harvest; the grain of the previous harvest was on its way to Alexandria and it was otherwise not possible to work as large parts of Egypt were inundated. There were all kinds of religious festivities, as described above, and there was much entertainment since the miracle of the divine fertility had occurred, everybody was off work and it was easy to sail everywhere[302]. Although not religious ceremonies in the strict sense of the word, these festivities were of course also associated with Isis and Osiris.

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[299] See for this also section 4.4.4.

[300] Cf. *Dunand 1973* I, 241-244.

[301] Cassius Dio 55.10.8; Xiphilinos 101.

[302] Cf. for a description of this period Diodorus 36, 10. The ceremonies around the flood are dealt with in *Bonneau 1964* and the overview of F. Perpillou-Thomas, *Fêtes d'Égypte ptolémaïque et romaine d'après la documentation papyrologique grecque* (1993).

Herodotos' description of a popular festival in the town of Boubastis probably gives a good impression of these festivities: he graphically describes what is shown in many Nilotic scenes: dancing and music-making Egyptians, who are engaged sometimes in boats on the river, sometimes on the riverbank, in sexual acts[303]. The music-making is usually done with the double oboe or rattles which can accompany the dancing. Perhaps these sticks also had the function of fending off evil[304]. Also the reposing on couches and relaxing under a velum or pergola on the banks of the river belong to this festive period, which forms the context of many Nilotic scenes[305].

Dancing dwarves are often depicted. This phenomenon can be associated specifically with the flood festivities, but it is also more generally Egyptian. Dancing Blacks and dwarves are already known from ancient Egypt and Egyptian dwarves were very popular in the Roman world, amongst other things as dancers and entertainers[306]. It is possible that this association can also explain the presence of dancing dwarves in Egyptian landscapes in general.

4.4.3 *Sexual scenes and symplegmata*

Sexual representations seem to have been associated in the first instance with the exuberant flood festivities, in particular when they take place in boats on the river. Sexual scenes appear relatively often in Nilotic landscapes. In six cases they take place on boats, in another eight cases on the bank of the river; male-male encounters as well as male-female encounters are depicted. In general the inhabitants of Egypt are then portrayed as dwarves[307]. It is quite conceivable that this licentiousness was also generally associated by the Romans with Egypt, and in particular with Canopus. Stories about the debauchery in Canopus were a topos in Roman literature; the place had a notoriously bad reputation[308].

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[303] Herodotos II, 60. Herodotos clearly mentions that it concerns an Artemis ceremony in Boubastis. It seems likely that these kinds of festivities, which recall fertility rituals, were also not uncommon during the Nile ceremonies, in which the fertility aspect played a central part. Cat. no. 100, a mosaic from Thmuis, seems to be a depiction of these kinds of festivities.

[304] The characteristically crossed sticks, which are noticeably present in Nilotic scenes—but also occur in non-Nilotic contexts—have raised many questions and have been variously interpreted. H. Goldmann, Two terracotta figurines from Tarsus, *AJA* 47 (1943) 22-34, is of the opinion that they primarily served to indicate or sustain the rhythm in dancing. In the article by G. Spano on the Nilotic painting in the Casa dei Pigmei in Pompeii (cat. no. 062) only the apotropaic effect emanating from these sticks is dealt with. *Whitehouse 1977*, appendix 1 sees in dwarves with a hair lock and sticks in their hands depictions or reminiscences of Ptah Pataikos. This Egyptian god is indeed sometimes depicted with sticks in his hands to ward off evil. See for a more extensive overview of the different opinions and some useful comments *Cappel 1994*, 57-60. For examples of dwarves with crossed sticks in Nilotic scenes cf., for instance, cat. nos. 001, 004, 011, 019, 020, 053, 060, 069, 081, 082, 096, 102 and 104.

[305] Cf. cat. nos. 035, 059, 060, 071, 086 and 100.

[306] Cf. E. Brunner-Traut, Neger- und Zwergentänze im alten Ägypten, *Nikephoros* 6 (1993) 23-32. A papyrus text from the third century AD mentions dancers with rattles as accompanying instrument (*krotalistra*), a practice often depicted in Nilotic scenes, cf. W.L. Westermann, The castanet dancers of Arsinoe, *JEA* 10 (1924) 134-144.

Sometimes sexual acts between two men or two male dwarves are depicted. Obscene male dancers, in the Roman world not infrequently Egyptians, were called *cinaedoi*. Originally these were, apart from dancers, a kind of clown and juggler, who were retained as members of wealthy households. Generally they were therefore slaves, whose occupation had a bad name. In the first century AD, the word *cinaedus* acquired more or less the connotation of 'male passive'; somebody who let himself be taken by other men[309]. The picture of a symplegma between two male Egyptians can perhaps also be explained by this for the Romans contemporary association.

4.4.4 *Battles with Nilotic fauna*

The inhabitants of Egypt are frequently depicted in Nilotic scenes fighting Nilotic fauna. The hunting of crocodiles and hippopotami can be specifically connected, as illustrated (cf. section 4.4.1.3), with the period of the flood, but would also have been part of everyday life. In particular when the inhabitants of Egypt are portrayed as dwarves or pygmies, it is striking how often their battle with crocodiles, hippopotami and large water birds is depicted. This can be explained in two ways. Firstly, the battle between the small men and large beasts must have produced a comical effect, something which in a number of cases was accentuated by the maker of the representation through applying comical details[310]. Furthermore, the battle between pygmies and cranes was a motif known from literature that already appears with Homer and is depicted from the sixth century BC onwards[311]. The depiction of the battle between an Egyptian Black and a crocodile would moreover be attributable to a certain Sotades[312]. There was thus a long tradition in the depiction of the battle with Nilotic fauna, which was continued in the Nile landscapes. A particular example can be seen in a painting from the Casa del Medico in Pompeii (cat. no. 059), where a crocodile has been caught by putting a stick with a rope attached to it in the animal's mouth. Through a story by Pliny, this custom can be attributed to the Tentirytes, nicknamed the 'crocodile riders of Dendera'[313]. In defending themselves against Nilotic fauna pygmies are sometimes portrayed defecating. Although such a depiction may well serve to characterise the person in question as a coward, a topos in literature from Aristoteles onwards, the primary meaning of pygmies pooping and peeing in the direction of Nilotic fauna, seems to be the enlargement of the comical effect.

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[307] Cf. cat. nos 001, 004, 010, 020, 050, 063 (symplegma on boat) and 003, 035, 039, 040, 044, 049, 056 and 059 (symplegma on land).

[308] See Ch. IV 2 and for Canopus and its reputation in general A. Bernand, *Alexandrie La Grande* (1966) 298-316.

[309] Cf. *Cappel 1994*, 59-60; L. Hermans, *Bewust van andere lusten. Homosexualiteit in het Romeinse keizerrijk* (1995) 50-55 and *Clarke 1998*, 84-85.

[310] Cf., for instance, cat. nos. 094, 102 and 104. A number of times (cat. nos. 003, 004, 019 and 104 for instance), dwarves use the (upper) part of an amphora as shield in their battles with Nilotic fauna. It is not clear how this should be

4.4.5 *Daily life*

Finally, Nilotic scenes show aspects of daily life in Egypt, in particular during the period of the flood.

As mentioned before, after the peak of the flood, a time of feasting and relaxing commenced. Apart from celebrating, people are also depicted relaxing: feeding ibises and fishing or strolling along the water's edge.

The beginning of the flood however was seized, amongst other things, to transport all the grain of the previous harvest to Alexandria. That could take place only then as the water in the many canals had risen to a sufficient level to be able to sail to the towns with the small boats with grain and other harvest products, and the Nile had risen sufficiently so that big boats could set course from the towns towards Alexandria. One could however not wait until the flood had progressed too far as the many granaries along the river would then have been inundated. The transportation of the harvest, from the

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explained. See for this motif and a suggestion on its background *Cappel 1994*, 64-65.

[311] Cf. section 4.3.3.

[312] Cf. E. Buschor, Das Krokodil des Sotades, *Münchener Jahrbücher der bildenden Kunst* 11 (1921) 1 ff.

[313] Cf. W.B. McDaniel, A fresco picturing pygmies, *AJA* 36 (1932) 260 ff.

own storage to the river and then onwards was therefore a characteristic activity at the beginning of the flood. It is clearly depicted on one of the three mosaic fragments from Republican Rome (cat. no. 025), and in other Nilotic scenes Egyptians with carrying poles seem to refer to it[314].

In a number of Nilotic scenes machines are depicted that were used in water management, which was obviously very important in Egypt. A shaduf is depicted four times. This is a water bucket on a lever with a counterweight, with which it was quite easy to transport water over a short distance. The shaduf is still used in the Egypian country-side, in particular to get water from the Nile to the irrigation canals[315]. A cochlea, another water-device machine, is also depicted in two representations[316].

5 *Nilotic scenes in the Roman world: development and occurrence*

About the origin of Nilotic scenes different opinions exist. Some scholars see the genre as a Roman invention; others suppose a relation with Egyptian or Ptolemaic art. Most recently Meyboom suggested the existence of a traditional Egyptian genre of Nilotic landscapes from the early Ptolemaic period onwards. Although no Hellenistic Nilotic scenes have been preserved, Meyboom reconstructs such an Egyptian predecessor by pointing to the popularity of scenes from the daily life of the poor along the Nile in Egyptian art, and the existence of Hellenistic statuettes of peasants, fishermen, dwarves and pygmies: the traditional population of Roman Nilotic scenes. Moreover the Nile mosaic of Palestrina, one of its unique features being the suggested high viewpoint, must go back to an archetype of a similar character and can hardly be imagined being made by combining smaller scenes[317]. All in all Meyboom's hypothesis seems most probable, although one could object that the supposed archetype could also come from one of the other Hellenistic centres, e.g. Pergamon. As we will see below, one of the most specific features of Roman Nilotic landscapes around 100 BC is their almost ethnographical character. Obviously such an interest in Egypt will also, or perhaps even mainly, have originated and been popular outside the country itself. The fact that the only parallel for the Nile mosaic of Palestrina probably also originates from Rome or its surroundings (cat. no. 025), and that fragments of what may be a second parallel (appendix no. 11) have been preserved in the city as well suggests that Rome itself must be viewed, also in this respect, as "a center of Hellenistic art"[318]. The mosaic fragment from Delos (cat. no. 121), seemingly pointing in the direction of Egypt again, can hardly play a role in the discussion. We do not know what the Nilotic landscape looked like, besides Delos has already become so international around 100 BC that the fragment can have both an Egyptian as well as an Italian background. The Egyptian mosaic fragment dated around 80 BC (cat. no. 101) seems similar to the other examples from that period in Rome, Delos and Pompei (cat. no. 047). A painted, ceramic bowl in Cairo may be an interesting parallel not yet used in the discussion[319]. The picture shows boys on boats on the Nile, one of whom is hunting a crocodile. If the object really can be dated in the third century BC, as recently suggested, it would fit in well with Meyboom's hypothesis. In any case, Nilotic scenes were known c. 100 BC in the eastern part of the Mediterranean (Egypt and Delos), while in this respect Italy should also be rated amongst the Hellenistic East[320].

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[314] Cf. *Versluys 2000*, 248-249 and for Egyptians with carrier sticks cat. nos. 004, 025, 044, 062, 071, 086 and 093 for instance.

[315] Cat. nos. 066, 068, 071 and 072; cf. N. Lewis, *Life in Egypt under Roman rule* (1983) 113-114 with pl. 6 and an illustrative print by David Roberts, which depicts the use of a shaduf in 1838 (F. Bourbon, *Yesterday and today Egypt. Lithographs and diaries by David Roberts R.A.* (1996) pl. 48).

[316] Cat. nos. 035 and 042. Cf. L. Jacono, Excursus, *NSc* (1927) 84-89 for a technical explanation.

[317] See *Meyboom 1995*, 96-107 ('the cultural background') esp. 100, also for an overview of the earlier opinions. Also *Clarke 1998*, 42-46 and 119 ff. suggests Hellenistic predecessors to the genre. For examples of Nilotic scenes in Pharaonic Egypt see most recently *Rauch 1999*, 257.

Meyboom correctly suggests that the Serapeum of Puteoli, which was definitely founded before 105 BC, could have played an important role in the distribution of Nilotic scenes and other egyptianising decorations in Italy[321]. Recent discoveries in Madrid and Rome of parallels to the Nile mosaic of Palestrina seem to suggest, however, that egyptianising decorations in that period were already popular in Italy on a much larger scale, and that, apart from the Serapeum in Puteoli, from which no archaeological information has been preserved, there may have been many more possible sources and examples[322]. The Nilotic scenes in this period, in so far as they have been preserved, all in mosaic, are characterised by a very lifelike and detailed depiction of Egypt in all aspects. Specific activities of the population during the period of the flood are thus depicted both in a religious and a profane sense, as well as a large variety of characteristic flora and fauna. Based on these Nile mosaics, the Roman image of Egypt until c. 90-80 BC could almost be called ethnographic, as is underlined by the Nile mosaic from the Casa del Fauno (cat. no. 047), with the different flowering stages of the lotus depicted in detail and correctly.

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[318] See *Pollitt 1986*, 150-163 (Ch. 7: Rome as a center of Hellenistic art). Cf. also *Werner 1998*, 267: "Es ist also davon auszugehen, dass dieses Genre erst Aufgrund einer Nachfrage der römischen Klientel entstand, wobei die hochwertigen Arbeiten zuanfangs wohl von hellenistischen Mosaizisten ausgeführt wurden (–)"

[319] Egyptian Museum, Cairo, 26437, from Gahira. Cf. *Pekáry 1999*, 62 sv. ET 4 ("3 Jh. v. ?"). I have not been able to study the object. The photo published by Pekáry is not good enough to be able to sustain or doubt the dating.

[320] It is important to realise that the premise of G. Siebert, Sur la mosaïque nilotique de Préneste. Problèmes d'iconographie, de chronologie et de style, *Ktema* 24 (1999) 251-258, 251 that the Nile mosaic of Palestrina would be a "*hapax* iconographique" is thus not at all true.

A different kind of pictures are the waterscapes with Egyptian elements, such as the frieze in the atrium of the Villa dei Misteri, which should be dated to c. 70 BC (cat. no. 067). These are in the tradition of the so-called 'Architekturlandschaften' which occur more frequently in the Second Style[323]. Nile landscapes, and their possible Hellenistic predecessors, would, with the *topographos* Demetrios, undoubtedly have played a role in establishing these Roman landscape paintings[324]. It is noticeable that in the early phase of the Second Style the Egyptian elements are still prominently present (Villa dei Misteri, cat. no. 067), while in later examples of the genre from Boscoreale and Oplontis (cf. appendix no. 13 and no. 15) specific Egyptian elements seem to be almost absent. Tybout's conclusion ("Nach kurzer Zeit (Stufe I, C) wurde das hier noch erkennbare Motiv der Nilschwelle auf vereinzelte, nicht signifikante Bildzitate zurückgedrängt") seems to be the only correct one[325]. More than half a century later, in the late Second Style around 20 BC, Egyptian elements are again added to this kind of landscapes, presumably due to the interest in Egyptian motifs and themes in that period. In one case (Casa di Livia, cat. no. 017) we can speak again of real Nile landscapes. More often, however, as the paintings in the Villa della Farnesina (appendix no. 10) show, we seem to be dealing with separate Alexandrian elements which are added to the landscapes as vignettes[326].

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[321] *Meyboom 1995*, 94-95.

[322] See also *Versluys 2000*, 250-251 with n. 59.

[323] The expression is used for the first time by *Rostovtzeff 1911* and is more neutral than the also occurring 'Sakrallandschaft', cf. *Tybout 1989*, 340 n. 1231.

[324] I will leave this complicated issue in abeyance; cf. in detail *Tybout 1989*, 339-345 and *Meyboom 1995*, 186-190 ("Chorography and topography as pictorial genres").

[325] *Tybout 1989*, 339-345 with all relevant parallels and literature, 344 for the quotation. The frieze in the Villa dei Misteri is for this reason included as a Nilotic scene in the catalogue and the landscapes in Boscoreale and Oplontis are not.

In that same period, around 20 BC, a very different way of depicting Egypt during the period of the flood becomes fashionable, when the inhabitants of the country of the Nile are portrayed as dwarves and pygmies (cf. for instance cat. nos. 008, 016, 017, 034 and 040). It is this representation and elements from it which will prove to be dominant in the following centuries. Landscape aspects are of course still present but the depiction of a landscape no longer seems to be the focus. Egypt and the flood of the Nile are now depicted by the representation of stereotypical, exotic elements, such as lotus flowers, ducks, hippopotami, flood festivities etc. After the battle near Actium, which resulted in an even larger influx of Egyptian decorative motifs and themes than in the period prior to 30 BC, the Roman image of Egypt, as reflected in the Nilotic scenes, changes paradoxically from realistic and detailed into stereotypical. The Roman conquest of Egypt thus in no way seems to have led to a greater and more detailed knowledge of the country in general; quite the reverse[327]. The appearance of Nile landscapes with dwarves and pygmies therefore seems to be connected directly with a change in the political context; to what extent the Roman discourse on Egypt is intrinsically changed by this will be discussed in chapter V[328].

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[326] Cf. *Rostovtzeff 1911*, 71 and *Tybout 1989*, 343.

[327] A similar conclusion was drawn by *Sonnabend 1986*, 68: "Der Ausschluss eines grossen Teils der römischen Bevölkerung von der aktuellen politischen Realität Ägyptens (by adding the country as imperial province, which was not governed by the Senate, where one was not allowed to travel at liberty, etc., mjv) hatte (–) zur Folge dass das Bild von der Gegenwart am Nil keine neuen Impulse mehr erhielt und gleichsam erstarrte.".

[328] A Nilotic relief fragment from Nemi is a unique example which does not fit into this line of reasoning (cf. appendix 04). The dating suggested is debatable but even if it is correct, this one example does not seem to be able to refute the general picture. Besides, it concerns the depiction of pygmies in a so-called peopled scroll, not in a real Nilotic landscape. The dwarf frieze from the Casa del Toro in Pompeii (cf. appendix no. 18), which is dated c. 30 BC, shows no obvious Nilotic characteristics.

Against the background sketched above, it is surprising that such a relatively small number of Nilotic scenes has been preserved from the last decades of the first century BC and the first decades of the first century AD (see, e.g., cat. nos. 011, 030, 031 and 052)[329]. This is apparently not because of their Egyptian character, as Egyptian motifs remain popular also in house decoration[330]. Both a more practical and a social explanation seem applicable here. In the Third Style, a very different arrangement of the walls is employed in painting than in the preceding periods: on a wall subdivided by light architectural structures, a figurative piece is now the focal point, often showing a mythological representation[331]. There is therefore no longer room for larger landscape scenes. Moreover, the exotic character of the Nilotic landscapes does not suit the character of the Third Style in general. The frequently occurring bucolic scenes want to express in particular an Augustan *pietas* notion; exotic *truphe* scenes do not fit in well with this notion[332].

From approximately AD 40, the beginning of the period of the Fourth Style, Nilotic scenes seem to become more popular again; in Pompeii, in particular in the period around AD 70, a noticeable number of examples has been preserved[333]. In Italy in the first century AD three kinds of Nile landscapes can be distinguished, which are all rooted in the first century BC: the Nilotic scenes with dwarves and pygmies, very different in both size and quality, as well as in degree of detail (see the major part of the in section 1.2.3 collected examples, illustrative is cat. no. 062 Pompeii, Casa dei Pigmei); extensive landscape representations with an Egyptian character (see, e.g., cat. no. 033 and cat. no. 067); and representations directly connected with the cults of the Egyptian gods (see, e.g., cat. no. 061). In the second century AD especially the dwarf and pygmy scenes occur frequently, whereas the battle between the small people and the large Nilotic animals is the most popular theme.

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[329] The fact that the number of preserved Third Style wall-paintings in general is relatively small can also play a role herein.

[330] Cf. for a summary *De Vos 1980* who in fact limited herself to the egyptianising representations from the period of the Third Style.

[331] Summarising for the Third Style, still *Bastet/De Vos 1979*, now with *Ehrhardt 1987*.

[332] Cf. *Zanker 1979*, 279 ff.

[333] This image does not seem to correspond with the situation in the Roman Empire in general (see the chronological overviews presented in Ch. III). Note also that, in general, a relatively large number of Fourth Style paintings have been preserved.

It is this latter element in the repertoire that will be imitated most frequently in the various provinces. This phenomenon spreads as it were from Italy over Europe and North Africa. Firstly, in the first and second centuries AD, Nilotic scenes also occur in Gallia and some Middle European provinces, where the diversity in representations and material types seems to show similarities with the situation in Italy during that period. Subsequently, from the period around AD 200 and during the entire third and fourth centuries, Nilotic scenes occur in Spain and North Africa. In both areas it concerns mainly mosaics, but the Nile landscapes look very different. In Spain, Nilotic scenes are generally used in a surrounding frieze. In all cases the battle between dwarves and birds is depicted, often on a frieze encircling a central representation (see, e.g., cat. nos. 102, 103 and 104). In North Africa on the other hand it concerns often larger, even floor-filling representations, all-over designs which are the focus themselves (see, e.g., cat. nos. 086, 087 and 089)[334]. The Near East forms, as it were, the furthest ring around Italy: the only preserved Nilotic landscape in the classical tradition, from Sepphoris (cat. no. 129), shows the well-known stereotype motifs. The last examples of the genre in this form (see, e.g., cat. nos. 103 and 106) date from the fourth century AD.

Later, in the fifth and sixth centuries AD, Nilotic landscapes occur in Christian iconography. In Christian religion, the Nile flood was seen as a token of God's concern with mankind. The Nile was regarded as one of the four rivers of paradise; the flood symbolised God's creation of the world, as the mosaic from Antiochia (cat. no. 122) illustrates[335]. The appearance and character of the pictures thereby changes completely, compared with the tradition which had taken shape in the second to fourth century AD. In line with the pastoral themes and motifs of country life, often the landscape element of the Nilotic landscapes in particular is again emphasised. Dwarves and pygmies disappear completely; especially Egyptian flora and fauna are depicted. Nilotic elements seem to be used in three ways in the Near East of the fifth and sixth centuries AD: there are 1) the real Nilotic scenes which quite extensively show a number of Nilotic elements, 2) topographic mosaics which depict the Nile and

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[334] The mosaic from Thmuis (Egypt, cat. no. 100) belongs to this category.

[335] See *Hermann 1959* and H. Maguire, *Earth and ocean. The terrestrial world in early Byzantine art* (1987) 50-55 who talks of Nilotic motifs as "allegories on the creation".

Egypt as topographic elements, and finally 3) a large number of mosaics that depict a Nilotic motif as part of a representation of the flora and fauna world. Only the first category has been included in the catalogue; examples of the other two categories can be found in the appendix[336]. The popularity of Nilotic motifs is illustrated by the many Coptic and other late-classical fabrics with such decorations (see appendix no. 34). Also in mosaics and paintings, however, Nilotic motifs continue to be used, as is, e.g., aptly illustrated by a mosaic dating to the early 8th century AD from the church of St. Stephen in Kastron Mefaa (Umm al-Rasas, Jordan) where a central field is bordered by a Nilotic frieze showing flora and fauna as well as putti fishing from boats[337].

Nilotic scenes thus change considerably in appearance during a period of seven centuries. Big differences can be observed, sometimes by chronological period, sometimes by region, which also would suggest differences in their specific meaning. It is noticeable that certain pictures are used as a kind of vignette, beyond the borders mentioned earlier. For example, the stern of the boat in the mosaic emblema from the house of Paquius Proculus in Pompeii (cat. no. 034), is identical to that of a boat in the Nile mosaic of Palestrina (cat. no. 006), including the tied-on ribbon. Also the great similarity between the portrayal of a hippopotamus with the mouth of a crocodile in the Nile mosaic of Palestrina and a similar animal depicted in the frieze in the house of Ma. Castricus in Pompeii (cat. no. 054) does not seem coincidental. Another example, which at the same time shows the continuation of Nilotic motifs in the Middle Ages and later periods, is the pygmy sailing on an amphora[338]. This comic fact, twice depicted in a Nilotic scene (see cat. nos. 020 and 081), apparently an Italian invention from the second century AD, is nowadays still visible at the lower half of the apse mosaic in S. Maria Maggiore in Rome. The representation of the Nile flood there, which within this context refers to Christian baptism, dates from the 13th century AD, but in its construction parts were used of the early Christian mosaics which were still present in the church; the second century AD motif of a pygmy sailing on an amphorae thus was also employed in Christian iconography and apparently re-used without problem in the 13th century AD[339]. The continuation of Nilotic themes also shows up in a 12th century AD relief, which was part of the sculpture around the main portal of the cathedral of S. Nicola Pellegrino in Trani (Apulia). In a peopled scroll, a pygmy fighting a crane is depicted: the animal hooks his talons in the buttocks of the pygmy and with his beak he grabs his foot, while the pygmy attempts to defend himself by grabbing the bird by its tail. The comic representation is in a tradition which already began in the Greek world, but which took shape in particular in Nilotic landscapes[340].

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[336] In the most recent overview of Byzantine mosaics with Nilotic elements (*Hachlili 1998*) there is no such division, resulting in an unbalanced presentation of the evidence.

[337] Cf. *Piccirillo 1993*, 36-37 and 238-239. Also a painting dated to the same century, originally preserved in the Qusayr ‘Amra complex in Jordan and now in Berlin, would show a Nilotic scene. It was placed under a throne painting that may represent Solomon (cf. our cat. no. 059). See M.E. van Lohuizen-Mulder, Frescoes in the Muslim residence and bathhouse Qusayr ‘Amra. Representations, some of the Dionysiac cycle, made by Christian painters from Egypt, *BABesch* 73 (1998) 125-137.

[338] This motif is discussed by J.P. Cèbe, Un thème de l’iconographie nilotique: le pygmée sur l’amphore, *EtClAix* 2 (1967) 163-171, who links the origin of it to the texts of Juvenal and Strabo on transport over water in terracotta boats.

It is only logical that the iconographical tradition of the Nilotic landscapes influenced Roman depictions of similar subjects. This phenomenon has already been noted with regard to landscape-paintings in the first century BC showing Nilotic subjects but not being Nilotic scenes themselves, as well as with regard to some third century AD sarcophagi showing the often occuring theme of boating psychai as a Nilotic scene[341]. Also Fourth Style waterscapes with an Egyptian atmosphere fall into this category (see appendix no. 16, one out of many examples). It is understandable that the popular coastal landscapes and harbour-scenes were sometimes, deliberately or not, enhanced with Nilotic elements or an Egyptian atmosphere. Also more in general, Nilotic aspects can be found in waterscenes. Some North African mosaics clearly show the mingling of these two elements[342]. Illustrative are a mosaic from Carthago, on which dwarves in boats are dancing and making music as in Nilotic landscapes (appendix no. 24), and another mosaic that may come from Carthago, showing sea-creatures amidst very large lotus flowers (appendix no. 28). Depictions of putti hunting large birds and animals in North African mosaics sometimes also seem to betray Nilotic inspiration (as appendix nos. 25, 26 and 27).

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[339] Cf. H. Karpp, *Die frühchristlichen und mittelalterlichen Mosaiken in Santa Maria Maggiore zu Rom* (1966) figs. 157-158 (overview) and Abb. 7 and 8 (details).

[340] Cf. C.A. Willemsen, D. Odenthal, *Apulia. Imperial splendour in Southern Italy* (1959). For the view of pygmies in the Middle Ages in general (much debated was the question whether they were beast or men) see M. Gusinde, *Kenntnisse und Urteile über Pygmäen in Antike und Mittelalter* (1962) 12 ff. For examples of other Nilotic motifs which fall outside the chronological context of this study see *Meyboom 1995*, VII n. 47.

[341] For the first see above; for the latter see cat. nos. 022-024 and appendix no. 02.

[342] As also noted *Cappel 1994*, 45.

Depictions of pygmies fighting animals are part of a different development. As already mentioned, the theme of pygmies fighting cranes can be traced back to the sixth century BC[343]. From the Augustan period onwards these kind of pictures also occur in their proper Nilotic environment. From then on, it becomes difficult to ascertain whether scenes with dwarves and pygmies were meant to be Nilotic or not, although—of course—originally they all had an Egyptian background. Because of the already existing iconographical tradition and the fact that dwarves were not uncommon in the Roman world, it seems that not all scenes with dwarves or pygmies can be qualified as Nilotic landscapes. The appendix presents a few doubtful cases: mosaics from the Aventine in Rome (no. 08), the Casa del Toro-frieze painting in Pompei (no. 18), the lost paintings from the Casa dei Capitelli colorati (no. 19) and the Casa della Regina Carolina (no. 20), MN 9102 (no. 23) and a bowl found in Nîmes (no. 38). More examples can easily be added. A specific theme only depicted in and evolving from Nilotic landscapes, is a large bird pecking a pygmy in his phallus (see cat. nos. 102 and 106). The remarkable relief from El Djem (appendix no. 29) thus undoubtedly has a Nilotic background, as well as the mosaic with enigmatic inscription from the eastern part of the Roman world (appendix no. 54).

The same reasoning can be followed with regard to other typical inhabitants of Nilotic landscapes: caricaturesquely depicted, coloured Egyptians, sometimes perhaps to be interpreted as *cinaedoi*. In a mosaic from Ostia their Nilotic background can clearly be noticed from the typical pair of crossed sticks they hold (appendix no. 06). A painting from the *fullonica* di Vesonius Primus in Pompeii, to conclude, shows, amongst other things, black people publicly defecating while also other elements of the picture remind of Nilotic scenes.

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[343] See section 4.3.3.

6 *Nilotic scenes in the Roman world: a reconstruction of the function*

"*Gegen 1786 erlebte die Beschäftigung mit ägyptischer Kunst und Kultur in der wissenschaftlichen wie auch in der modischen Welt Frankreichs einen ersten Höhepunkt. Wenige Jahre später finden sich in den deutschen Modezeitungen Reflexe dieser Ägyptenmode. Neben geheimnisvolle Sphinxgrotten und Vorschlägen für Garteneinbauten in Form der Tempelpylone von Luxor sind es auch extravagante Inneneinrichtungen mit Ausblick in Nillandschaften, die erstaunlicherweise als Raumschmuck für Freimaurer besonders geeignet erschienen.*"[344]

As shown in the above quotation, extravagant interiors with a view onto a painted Nile landscape were thus not only popular in the Roman world, but also occur in 18th and 19th century Germany. It has become clear from the preceding paragraphs that as far as the interpretation of Nilotic scenes is concerned, it seems first of all necessary to study the contexts on the basis of an iconological analysis. Simplifying we could say that where an iconographical description and iconological analysis provide information about the placing of a representation at an abstract level, an examination of the direct context will do this on a practical and contextual level. Hence a combination of both factors is important for the final reconstruction of the function. All Nilotic landscapes and many elements in them do, of course, point to the Nile flood (the abstract level), but sometimes seem to have been executed in a certain place, or are showing a combination of certain elements, primarily for very different, practical or personal reasons. The above quotation shows that the same kind of egyptianising decoration, in the same period, can be interpreted as both exoticism, and—in the case of the Freemasons—a more intrinsic reference[345]. A reconstruction of the function of Nilotic scenes, in various forms occurring for more than six centuries from Syria to Spain in various contexts, could therefore hardly be uniform.

In a reconstruction of the meaning, first of all the specific character of the Nilotic landscape is important, as has become clear on the ground of the executed iconographical and iconological analysis: Nilotic scenes are primarily not random depictions of Egypt but flood scenes. The life-giving flood of the Nile, which provided Egypt's fertility, caused much amazement during the whole of Antiquity. In an iconological sense Nilotic scenes therefore seem to be fertility and abundance scenes, such as depictions with a Dionysiac character[346]. One of the most remarkable as well as enlightening examples of this association are the so-called Nile-acclamations: in Egypt *euergetai* were hailed as the Nile because of the well-being they provided[347]. Nilotic scenes are *truphe* motifs which as such perfectly fit in with the function of the recreational rooms in a Roman house[348]. A few times the exchangeability of Dionysiac and Nilotic scenes can be demonstrated very concretely: the triclinium mosaic from Sepphoris (cat. no. 129), where a composition showing scenes of the life and cult of Dionysos was restored with a panel showing a Nilotic scene, is the most remarkable example.

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[344] *Syndram 1999*, 56.

[345] I therefore do not understand the "erstaunlicherweise" in the quotation by Syndram. References to Egypt in general and Isis and Osiris in particular are very appropriate in the context of Freemasons, cf. Ch. I 2.2.

Such a general interpretation of the genre is however both enlightening and superficial. Every time, in fact, it seems to be the context that clarifies the specific function of this *truphe* motif. For a follower of the cult of Isis, the representation will refer to the goddess of the flood and her divine providence; for a Roman grain merchant, the representation perhaps alludes to the wealth that is granted to him and his family by Egypt; in the modest house of a Pompeian citizen, the scene refers to a general feeling of abundance and happiness; in a nymphaeum, the real refreshingly cool water flowed over a represention of the flooded Nile; in an imperial context, the representation would have referred to the battle near Actium and the Roman conquest of Egypt, etc.

It should be concluded that Nilotic scenes are thus primarily *truphe* motifs, whose specific meaning can differ strongly and depends upon the context in which the depictions functioned. Usually the genre cannot be directly associated with the cult of the Egyptian gods in the Roman world, as was often assumed[349].

Whereas first a general interpretation has been established based on a study of the images themselves and their context, in a further examination such an overall interpretation seems to disintegrate again[350].

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[346] Cf. P. Zanker, *Eine Kunst für die Sinne. Zur Bilderwelt des Dionysos und der Aphrodite* (1998) and, more in general, *L'association dionysiaque dans les sociétés anciennes* (1986).

[347] Cf. R. Merkelbach, Eine Acclamation als Hesies-Osiris (Pap. Oxy. 41), *ZPE* 72 (1988) 65-66 and the indices of the *BE* sv. Neile. This interesting subject needs further research.

[348] As *Meyboom 1995*, 89. See, more in general, also *Zanker 1999*, 41-42 ("Das römische Haus als Ort des otium").

[349] See for a refutation of this interpretation specifically *Versluys/Meyboom 2000*.

As in fact all archaeological source material, Nilotic scenes seem to be interpretable at four levels, or perhaps better in four ways. Firstly, a very factual, *practical* level that starts from the archaeological material itself: a nymphaeum in a Roman garden is decorated with a Nilotic landscape because the real water could thus flow over the depicted water. Secondly, a level associated with the *personal context*: a nymphaeum in a Roman garden is decorated with a Nilotic scene because a follower of the Egyptian cults or a grain merchant who regularly stayed in Alexandria lived there. Thirdly a more abstract level, determined by various *social contexts* that surround the material: a nymphaeum in a Roman garden is decorated with a Nilotic scene because it is a *truphe* motif which was appropriate for such an area. And fourthly, a *syntagmatic* level, that is related to the larger narrative as it took place in time: a nymphaeum in a Roman garden is decorated with a Nilotic scene because the Romans thus expressed their attitude and thoughts in respect of Egypt in particular and the exotic Other in general. All four interpretations are equally true and moreover are closely interrelated. In the catalogue, much attention is given to the practical level and the personal context by a careful portrayal of the Nilotic scenes themselves and the room in which they functioned, and by describing the relevant aspects of the house and (where possible) the owners and occupational history. Attention is given to the social contexts by discussing the relations between Rome and Egypt, and by the examination of the meaning of decorations in specific contexts in the Roman world in general; in chapter IV these social contexts and the role Nilotic landscapes play therein will be further elaborated. The Roman attitude and thoughts in respect of Egypt as part of the Roman discourse on the Other, what I have labeled the syntagmatic level, will be dealt with in chapter V.

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[350] In this vein already *Tybout 1989*, esp. 357 ff. who emphasizes time and again the "grundsätzliche Mehrdeutigkeit" of the Second Style Roman wall-paintings he studied and aptly describes *truphe* as one of the "Umschreibungen, die freilich auf die Thematik des grössten Teils der antiken Wandmalerei und Mosaikkunst zutreffen" (368, with further references to literature on the exact meaning of this notion). To underline the improbability of a generalising, overall interpretation of genres of landscape painting, the scholarly discussion on the character and meaning of 17th century Dutch landscape painting can be supplied as a parallel. First, it was generally assumed that these landscapes simply reflected the Dutch environment and, on a more abstract level, Dutch mentality. Later much more pronounced interpretations were sought for. The landscapes were now regarded, e.g., as allegories with a moralistic, religious message. Most recently, Gibson has argued for again another overall interpretation of the landscape paintings as 'pleasant places'. Pleasure, not preaching would thus have been their main attraction. Without wanting to go further into the discussion here, it can be argued that— as all authors have good arguments to sustain their opposed views – also the specific meaningn of 17th century Dutch landscape paintings could differ strongly and primarily depends upon the context and the observers associated with it. See W.S. Gibson, *Pleasant places. The rustic landscape from Bruegel to Ruisdael* (1999) with references to the earlier interpretations mentioned.

The recently published monograph by Muth on Roman mythological mosaics is one of the few attempts known to me to explain in such a diverse number of ways the occurrence of a specific form of decoration in houses in the Roman period, although the author does not consciously apply the ideas formulated above. It is therefore, as a kind of appendix to this section, interesting and perhaps elucidating to briefly discuss Muth's conclusions here and to compare them with the ideas just formulated[351].

The subject of the monograph in a wider sense are the representations of (episodes of) Greek myths on mosaics in the Roman house during imperial times. Muth begins with extensively showing the connections between area and decoration, and subsequently presents an iconographical and iconological interpretation of the themes selected by her: Hylas and the nymphs and Achilles and Lykomedes' daughters: "Der Schlüssel (–) liegt (–) im Bild selbst" (110), she concludes correctly. In the representations of the myth of Hylas, Muth is struck by the fact that the mosaics always show a specific episode, namely the moment of the abduction of Hylas. Together with an analysis of the elements occurring in the depictions, this leads Muth to an interpretation of the representations as "(–) die Thematisierung des Ideals vom erotisch attraktiven Mann als Geliebter und Liebhaber der Frauen." (124): they would therefore be erotic motifs. A similar interpretation would partly apply to Achilles and Lykomedes' daughters; an examination of the occurring elements would show that the representations meant to show man in two social roles: on the one hand as a hero, on the other as a lover. According to Muth, both the representations thus relate to: " (–) verschiedenartiger topoi der androzentrischen Vorstellungswelt." (179).

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[351] *Muth 1998*. See also my review of this important book in *BABesch* 76 (2001) 204-205.

For a better understanding, in line with the emphasis on the different meanings of parts of the Roman house, a "kontextuell-differenzierende Interpretationsaufsatz" (43) is suggested next. Erotic aspects match private rooms, whereas a depiction of virtus seems more appropriate in a public area. However, Muth correctly concludes that such a distinction cannot be maintained in a strict sense. Moreover, the representations are not only part of the room but they simultaneously form that room: "Die Mythenbilder als raumdefinierendes Moment" (261), as the author indicates. In relation to the depictions of myths in general, Muth next concludes that their "semantische Polyvalenz" (203), therefore their ambiguity, explains the great and long popularity. The representations could be used and understood in many ways: "Die besondere Qualität der Mythen war (–) zweifelsohne ihre Ambivalenz" (294).

Muth then proceeds to the boundary between what I have labeled social contexts and syntagmatic level, by putting forward that the depictions of myths were used to articulate certain values and norms in society. Muth sees the mythological images also "als Entwurf einer androzentrischen Wertewelt"; they are "Lebensbilder" which are formulated on the basis of mythical protagonists (243). Furthermore, the author links a shift in preference from *truphe* motifs (2nd/3rd century AD) to hunting scenes (3rd/4th century AD) to social changes, in which self-presentation of the local elite became increasingly important[352].

"Im Prozess gesellschaftlicher Selbstdarstellung (–) leistete der Mythos in seiner Transponierung von Alltagsdiskursen einen wichtigen, zugleich aber auch polyvalenten Beitrag zur Konstruktion von Lebensatmosphäre.", or "Leben im Mythos: zwischen Affirmation und Kompensation" (332), concludes Muth not very elucidatingly. The power of the book therefore lies mainly in the diversity of angle with which a motif is examined and in the broad, cultural historical interpretation framework which is constructed. An important point of criticism is that the different levels or ways of interpretation are not separated so that an amalgam of suggestions is created. This is reinforced by the small catalogue which in respect to the selected motifs, make interpretations almost impossible on a socio-contextual level, let alone a syntagmatic level, while on such a basis also the argumentation of general interpretations remains meagre on whatever level.

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[352] This on the basis of research by other scholars; her own collection of source material is too small to establish such syntagmatic changes.

The notions and interpretations employed by Muth fit in well with the ideas formulated in this conclusion. On a *practical* level, the representations discussed by her can be interpreted as 'Mythenbilder' pur sang, depictions of a Greek myth which can be admired and discussed in an appropriate environment. On the level of the *personal context*, it concerns representations specifically of the myth of Hylas or Achilles, the choice of which could be connected with the personal preferences, associations or pretentions of the occupiers of the house. On the level of the *social contexts*, the representations can perhaps be interpreted as erotic motifs. On a *syntagmatic* level, the depictions can reflect the history and development of the Roman man-woman relations. Such a distinction, which of course especially serves to enlarge our perception of the interpretation of the material, seems to show more the many possible associations of the classical observer than Muth's closing conclusions, while the multiformity in interpretation—not one but many different meanings—is guaranteed.

PART IV
ROMAN AEGYPTIACA

ROMAN AEGYPTIACA

"Die geistigen Umrisse einer Kulturepoche geben vielleicht für jedes Auge ein verschiedenes Bild, und wenn es sich vollends um eine Zivilisation handelt, welche als nächstes Muster der unsrigen noch jetzt fortwirkt, so muss sich das subjektive Urteilen und Empfinden jeden Augenblick beim Darsteller und beim Leser einmischen."[353]

Nilotic scenes are part of the much larger group of Egyptian and egyptianising artefacts found in the Roman Empire, outside Egypt. In this chapter an attempt will be made to introduce briefly this wider frame with the aim to verify the interpretation of the Nilotic landscapes developed in chapter III. Does the suggested interpretation of Nilotic scenes fit into the interpretative framework of Egyptian and egyptianising artefacts in the Roman world in general?

To answer that question, it will first be necessary to give a brief outline, per region, of those other Aegyptiaca, their interpretation and meaning. The key question of the second part of this study—how should Egyptian and egyptianising monuments and artefacts in the Roman world be interpreted?—will thus emerge even more succinctly. It will show, however, that a general outline will not suffice for the answering of this question. Only a case study, in which preferably a relatively large volume of representative archaeological material from a relatively limited definable entity, such as a town or region, can be coherently investigated, seems to be able to generate a profound answer to the question. Next, the Aegyptiaca of the city of Rome will therefore be introduced, investigated and interpreted. To conclude, we will try to find out to what extent the conclusions thus reached are more generally applicable and whether a generally valid answer can be formulated to the question on the meaning of Aegyptiaca in the Roman world.

An anecdotal example is a good overture to the discussion of this issue. Gallo, in his essay on the cult places of Isis in Italy, mentions a rather special reason for the presence of Egyptian material in Italian soil:

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[353] *Burckhardt*, 1.

> "(–); in qualche caso abbiamo addirittura la prova che alcuni oggetti egizi autentici comperati in Egitto nell'Ottocento vennero inseriti di frodo negli scavi proprio nell'intento di aumentarne l'importanza archeologica."[354]

The scholar searching for an explanatory model of the Egyptian and egyptianising artefacts found in Italian soil, is therefore warned.

1 *Other Egyptian and egyptianising monuments and artefacts in the Roman world*

In (almost) all Roman provinces Aegyptiaca have been found, sometimes in large numbers—though never more than in Italy itself—sometimes in very modest numbers. From the 1950's and 1960's onwards a systematic inventory of this material has been started, in which the French scholar Leclant and the Dutch scholar Vermaseren were the driving forces[355]. In the series *Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'empire romain* (*EPRO*), published by Vermaseren, a large number of volumes is devoted to certain areas in the Roman Empire and the Egyptian and egyptianising artefacts found there. The title of the series indicates what the aim was of the inventory undertaken: to gain insight into the role of the eastern religions in the Roman Empire. Attention was therefore not restricted to Egyptian monuments and artefacts but was also given to other influences from the eastern part of the Mediterranean area. Although this work is very valuable as a reference for the investigation undertaken here, there is one large drawback in the use of the huge quantity of information: the selection criterion is a relation with the cult of the, in this case, Egyptian gods. Usually therefore not all Aegyptiaca from a certain area were collected, but only artefacts which were thought to have a connection with the cult of Isis and other Egyptian gods. In sketching the status quaestionis in relation to the Nilotic landscapes, it has been shown already that certain categories of (archaeological) material are thus insufficiently exposed: Nilotic scenes hardly occur in the many *EPRO* volumes[356]. However, because almost all Egyptian and egyptianising monuments and artefacts in the Roman world were thought to be connected with the cults of the Egyptian gods, the (archaeological) material presented in the *EPRO* volumes is reasonably complete. It goes without saying that the interpretation of the monuments and artefacts is usually religious. A more general drawback of the series has always been a lack of synthesis while also the volumes themselves already differ greatly: in definitions used, selection criteria, completeness and quality. Only very recently L. Bricault put together all Isiaca, thus providing an overview of all the archeological material at hand[357]. Hence, in studies of Aegyptiaca in a certain part of the Roman Empire, we should bear in mind a selective presentation of the material on the one hand and a prior established interpretation frame, i.e. religious, on the other[358].

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[354] *Gallo 1997*, 290 with reference.

[355] Leclant is an Egyptologist, who, as one of his specialisms, pursued Aegyptiaca in the Roman Empire. As one of the first, he attempted in the 1950's to give overviews of the material in his contributions to *Orientalia*. Later he collated a bibliographical overview of the huge quantity of literature on the role of the Egyptian gods and cults in the Roman world (*IBIS*). See for his bibliography until 1994 *Hommages Leclant*. Vermaseren dealt with the cult of Mithras in particular and founded the *EPRO* series. For his bibliography cf. *Hommages Vermaseren* I, 1-7. Publishing and thus making the (archaeological) material more accessible was very important for both of them; not without reason the *EPRO* series was titled 'études préliminaires'.

What exactly is meant by 'Egyptian and egyptianising monuments and artefacts'? 'Egyptian' refers to man-made objects, originating from Egypt. In principle, the notion 'egyptianising' indicates that an artefact is made in Egyptian style, after an Egyptian example, without originating from Egypt itself. The notion is far less clear because, for instance, also Nilotic scenes are sometimes called 'egyptianising', whereas the depictions concerned are neither made in an Egyptian style, nor are they made directly after Egyptian examples. 'Egyptianising' in this study is therefore used in the wider sense of 'bringing to mind an association with Egypt', either by style, or by subject, or on the grounds of another Roman association. The term 'Aegyptiaca' covers both categories.

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[356] Cf. Ch. I 3.2.

[357] The *Atlas*, based on the many *EPRO* volumes and all recent literature, will greatly facilitate further research in this domain. In the introduction the author distinguishes between Isiaca and Aegyptiaca and shortly illustrates problems in their interpretation. Unfortunately the book lacks a general conclusion and a profound, overall interpretation. As I could only study this important publication when finishing the manuscript, the detailed information provided by the *Atlas* is not always systematically integrated into this chapter. I thank L. Bricault for insight into his unpublished manuscript.

[358] See also Ch I 2 and this chapter, section 2.1.2.

1.1 *Italy*

After preparatory work in relation to Campania by Tran Tam Tinh, Malaise presented in 1972 a preliminary overview of the Egyptian monuments and artefacts in Italy, in which he generally also included the egyptianising material[359]. Malaise's catalogue forms the basis of all later research and still convinces by its completeness and restraint in interpretation. Later publications usually add new finds without changing fundamentally the image sketched by Malaise[360].

On the basis of the catalogue compiled by him, Malaise investigated how and under which circumstances the cults of the Egyptian gods came to Italy and subsequently how they spread over Italy[361]. His conclusion was that Delos played a key part in the familiarisation of the Isis cult among the Italian *negotiatores*, who thus provided a foothold in Italy for the Hellenised Egyptian gods. Later, the character of these in fact Hellenistic deities became again more Egyptian under the influence of the direct contact of Italy with Egypt, and their occurrence also became more general. Therefore a "penetration" in the Republican period occurred, which laid the foundation for a "diffusion" in imperial times. The spread of the Isis cult over Italy would emanate from trading towns like Puteoli and Aquileia, where the Egyptian gods arrived and, with the *negotiatores*, spread over the whole of Italy via the trading routes. According to Malaise, the distribution of Aegyptiaca over Italy can be explained from that notion[362].

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[359] Cf. *Tran Tam Tinh 1964*, *1971* and *1972*; *Malaise 1972a*. Part of the material in Ostia was collected in *Floriani Squarciapino 1962*.

[360] Also in 1972 Roullet published an extensive though not always reliable catalogue of Egyptian and egyptianising monuments and artefacts from imperial Rome. Substantial additions after *Malaise 1972a* are G.S. Gasparo, *I culti orientali in Sicilia* (1973), M. Malaise, Documents nouveaux et points de vue récents sur les cultes isiaques en Italie, in: *Hommages Vermaseren* II (1978) 627-717; *Civiltà dell'antico Egitto in Campania. Per un riordinamento della collezione egiziana del Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli* (1983); *Del Francia 1991*; S. De Caro, Novità isiache dalla Campania, in: *Adamo Muscettola/De Caro 1994*, 7-21, and the exhibition catalogue *Iside* in which a sizeable chapter is devoted to the distribution of the cult of Isis in Italy (Sezione V: diffusione del culto isiaco in Italia, 289-523), of which in particular the more general articles are important here: E. Leospo, La diffusione del culto isiaco nell'Italia settentrionale, 365-367; M.C. Guidotti, La diffusione del culti isiaco nell'Italia centrale, 370-372; F. De Salvia, La diffusione del culto isiaco nell'Italia meridionale, 382-383; S. De Caro, Iside nei Campi Flegrei, 348-351.

[361] *Malaise 1972b*.

[362] *Malaise 1972b*, 352-354 with an accompanying map showing the 'routes isiaques'. Briefly summarised in *Malaise 1984*, 1640-1643.

1.1.1 *Aegyptiaca in pre-Roman Italy*

All monuments and artefacts mentioned in the following overview date from the second century BC onwards, because only from that period onwards it seems appropriate to speak of a Roman Empire in the sense of a geographical, political and, at least to some extent, cultural entity. However, a very large number of Egyptian and egyptianising artefacts have been preserved in the Italian peninsula which date from an earlier period. As an attempt will be made in this chapter to discuss the general meaning of Aegyptiaca in Italy, also it seems useful to discuss briefly (and only with the aid of examples) this (archaeological) material. The artefacts concerned were collected in a monograph by Hölbl, in which much attention was given to the question of the meaning of these Aegyptiaca in a new context[363]. The oldest Egyptian artefacts in Italy date from the 9th and 8th century BC and were found in Etruria and around the Gulf of Naples. Aegyptiaca are relatively common in the second half of the 7th century BC, especially in the form of amulets and scarabs whereas tombs usually form the context. An exceptional example is the so-called Bocchoris vase, found in a grave in Tarquinia, together with a large number of Egyptian figurative amulets: it concerns a faïence vase with a figurative decoration in relief, as well as a hieroglyphical inscription, which mentions the Egyptian Bocchoris (718/717-712 BC). The tomb is dated to the first half of the 7th century BC. The problem with the interpretation of eastern artefacts in an Italian context in this period is that it usually cannot be ascertained whether we are dealing with an imported piece or a locally manufactured imitation. Besides, the artefacts often show various eastern influences (Phoenician, Egyptian, etc.), as for instance the above-mentioned Bocchoris vase, and they therefore cannot attest to direct (trade) contacts on a large scale[364]. Summarising, it seems therefore that we are dealing with a "ineinanderwerken der mittelmeerischen Kulturkreise", in which orientalising objects and forms, among them Egyptian and egyptianising ones, are applied in an Italian context[365]. Artefacts such as the Bocchoris vase would mainly have been attractive as precious and luxury objects. This also applies to the many amulets and scarabs. However, this latter group seems also to have kept its intrinsic, magic meaning[366]. The Aegyptiaca are almost without exception found in and around towns and seem to form almost no part of the indigenous contexts.

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[363] *Hölbl 1979.* Cf. also *Hölbl 1986.*

[364] For a synthesis of this problem and a number of exceptional 'orientalia' cf. A. Rathje, Oriental imports in Etruria in the eighth and seventh centuries BC.: their origins and implications, in: D. & F.R. Ridgway (eds.), *Italy before the Romans. The Iron Age, Orientalizing and Etruscan periods* (1979) 145-183, for the Bocchoris vase cf. 150-152 sv. II and *Hölbl 1979,* 81-94, II sv. 122.

[365] *Hölbl 1979,* 388 for this quotation.

1.1.2 *Religious contexts*

In this short presentation of the Egyptian and egyptianising monuments and artefacts preserved in Roman Italy, the temples will be reviewed first. Following the most recent inventory, there were public sanctuaries for Isis and/or Sarapis in 14 towns[367].

In the northern provinces of Venetia/Histria and Transpadana there are thought to have been sanctuaries in Industria, Verona and Aquileia[368]. In Industria, structures of a sanctuary were identified as an Egyptian temple on the basis of an exedra, similar to that in the Iseum Campense in Rome (cf. section 2.5.4). There are however no inscriptions, literary references or archaeological finds which support this hypothesis convincingly[369]. The identification of an Iseum and a Serapeum in Verona is based on the find of a number of egyptianising sculptures, amongst them a statue of Sarapis, a number of votive inscriptions and some altars dedicated to the Egyptian gods. There are no structures which can be identified with certainty as the temple; on the basis of the findspot of a large part of the material it is assumed that the temple was near the theatre of the town[370].

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[366] This is shown for instance by the fact that the Italian makers of these egyptianising artefacts gradually transform the Egyptian gods into gods known to them; Bes for instance becomes Heracles. Cf. *Hölbl 1986*, 413: "Die Frage nach der Aussage der ägyptischen und ägyptisierenden Bilder führte zu der Erkenntnis dass sie (soweit eine Argumentation möglich ist) grundsätzlich sinnvoll nach ihrem ägyptischen, wesensmässigen Inhalt angewandt wurden."

[367] *Gallo 1997.*

[368] In older literature sometimes a sanctuary for the Egyptian gods in Roman Bologna is reported. The existence of this is however unlikely, cf. *Malaise 1972a*, 25 sv. 6-7, against *Wild 1984*, 1762-1763.

[369] Cf. *Malaise 1972a*, 36-37; *Wild 1984*, 1783-1785 (the author qualifies the identification of most of the Isis and Sarapis sanctuaries included by him with the terms 'certain', 'probable', 'possible', and 'doubtful'; Wild's critical view is often elucidating and his judgement will therefore sometimes be mentioned when referring to *Wild 1984*: in this case: 'possible'. Note however that at the same time Wild's synthesis is incomplete and not always very well documented). For a not problematising synthesis: E. Zanda, Il santuario isiaco di Industria, in: *Iside*, 352-357 with all previous literature. Only the find of a single sistrum and a votive tablet with the depiction of a sistrum can be supplied as archaeological evidence in support.

[370] Cf. *Malaise 1972a*, 18-20 (who tentatively reconstructs a sanctuary for Isis

A large number of Aegyptiaca has been preserved in the port of Aquileia. On the basis of the findspot of a number of votive inscriptions, the existence of a temple for Isis has been postulated; perhaps even in the Republican period there was already a public cult place dedictated to Isis[371].

In Etruria, the existence of sanctuaries for Egyptian gods has been suggested in Florence and nearby Fiesole. Remains of a small temple, discovered in Florence in the 18th century, are interpreted as an Isis sanctuary, amongst other things on the basis of a number of votive inscriptions and marble fragments of the decoration which show uraeus snakes. The temple was at the outskirts of the town near the gate leading to Fiesole[372]. In Fiesole itself, at the end of the 19th century a statue of Isis and a fragment of a statue of Osiris were found among some walls and other architectural elements. It is possible that these are the remains of a temple[373].

Latium probably had the largest and most important temple of the Egyptian gods in Italy: the Iseum Campense on the Campus Martius in Rome. In the third century AD, also a large and impressive Serapeum was built on the Quirinal. Whether other large public sanctuaries for Isis and the other Egyptian gods can be assumed in Rome will be discussed later[374]. Furthermore, the existence of sanctuaries is supposed in Ostia, Portus, Nemi, and Praeneste. The remains of a Serapeum in Ostia can be identified with certainty thanks to a mention in the *Fasti Ostiensis*[375]. A sanctuary for Isis in Ostia is reconstructed on the basis of archaeological finds and inscriptions which mention a *sacerdos Isidis Ostiensis*; there are no architectural

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and a Sarapis temple); *Wild 1984*, 1842 and M. Bolla, L'Iseo e Serapeo di Verona, in: *Iside*, 358-362. The selection of the (archaeological) material which can qualify as evidence for a possible temple in the article by M. Bolla seems trustworthy; *Budischovsky 1977* had supplied erroneously a number of Aegyptiaca as evidence for the existence of a temple.

[371] Cf. *Malaise 1972a*, 6-13; *Wild 1984*, 1762 ('possible') and A. Giovannini, F. Maselli Scotti, Presenze egizie ad Aquileia: l'oggettistica minore e il culto di Iside, in: *Iside*, 363-364.

[372] Cf. *Malaise 1972a*, 46-48; M.C. Guidotti, L'Iseo di Firenze, in: *Iside*, 369. *Wild 1984* does not include the sanctuary. For the inscriptions see *RICIS* 511/0212.

[373] Cf. *Malaise 1972a*, 43-45 ("Ces ruines sont probablement celles d'un *sacellum* réservé à Isis et à Osiris"); *Wild 1984*, 1777 ('possible') and M.C. Guidotti, L'Iseo di Fiesole, in: *Iside*, 368 ("(–) un piccolo Iseo vero e proprio (–)").

[374] Cf. Ch. IV 2.

[375] Cf. for this mention and a short discussion of this sanctuary cat. no. 002.

remains which can be connected with a possible temple, nor inscriptions mentioning an Isis temple[376]. Convincing evidence has been found in nearby Portus: a marble architrave mentions a (–) *aedem ac porticus deae Isidis* (–), which was restored in the second half of the fourth century AD[377]. In Nemi the sanctuary for Diana included a *fanum* for Isis and for Bubastis, as can be concluded from a preserved inscription. Archaeological finds of Aegyptiaca may support this[378]. A number of Egyptian and egyptianising objects have also been found in Praeneste. Most notable are an inscription for Sarapis from the second century AD, a statuette of Isis-Tyche from the third century AD, some fragments of two obelisks and the Nile mosaic (cat. no. 006). The context of the Nile mosaic of Palestrina is sometimes interpreted as a sanctuary for Egyptian gods[379]. There are however no indications for this; it probably concerns the basilica and curia of ancient Palestrina[380].

In Campania, Egyptian sanctuaries are postulated in the ancient towns of Cumae, Pozzuoli, Pompeii, and Benevento. A temple in Cumae is suggested on the basis of the find of a statue of Anubis and some other Aegyptiaca. Although a sanctuary for the Egyptian gods is quite conceivable, there is no concrete indication for a reconstruction of it[381]. This evidence does exist in Puteoli: the well-known *lex parieti faciendo* in which already in 105 BC a Serapeum is indirectly mentioned[382]. This Sarapis temple is the earliest Egyptian sanctuary on Italian soil which can be postulated with certainty. Perhaps there was also an Iseum in the town; on a flask dating to the second century AD, which as decoration shows a view of Puteoli, a temple for the Egyptian gods, identified by an inscription, is shown by the harbour. It is not clear whether this indication refers to the Serapeum mentioned in the *lex parieti faciendo*, or that we are dealing here with a second Egyptian cult place. More views of Puteoli on bottles have survived which confirm the existence of a sanctuary for the Egyptian gods in the second century AD[383]. Of all the sanctuaries, the Isis temple in Pompeii is the only one of which the architecture and the architectural decoration have been preserved to a relatively large extent, including the dedication inscription which was placed above the entrance to the temple terrain with the rebuilding, necessary after the earthquake of AD 62. In the study of sanctuaries for Egyptian gods in Italy in general, the Pompeiian Iseum is therefore of utmost importance[384]. Of the Isis sanctuary in Beneventum, apart from an inscription mentioning the temple, many remains of the furnishing have been preserved, amongst them obelisks, statues of Isis and her priestesses, sphinxes, statues of monkeys, falcons and the Apis bull, and fragments of reliefs and pilasters. It concerns both Egyptian and egyptianising material. There are various theories on the location of the sanctuary and the exact reconstruction of the buildings and their furnishing. For the time being, it seems to have been one sanctuary, which probably comprised temples for various Egyptian gods. It was built by Domitian in AD 88/89, but the Egyptian gods were already worshipped in Beneventum before that time[385].

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[376] Cf. *Floriani Squarciapino 1962*, 27-29; *Malaise 1972a*, 66-87; *Wild 1984*, 1801-1805 and E.J. Shepherd, Il culto di Iside a Ostia, in: *Iside*, 324-325.

[377] Cf. *Malaise 1972a*, 88-95, sv. 16 for the inscription and F. Zevi, Il cosiddetto 'Iseo di Porto' e la sua decorazione, in: *Iside*, 322-323. The latter thinks he can identify recently excavated architectural remains with this sanctuary. *Wild 1984* does not include the sanctuary.

[378] Cf. *Malaise 1972a*, 63-65 sv. Nemus Dianea and G. Ghini, Dedica a Iside e Bubasti dal santuario di Diana Nemorense, in: *Iside*, 335-337 with all previous literature and a discussion of the inscription. *Wild 1984* does not include this cult place.

[379] Most recently M. Krumme, Isis in Praeneste. Zur Rekonstruktion des unteren Heiligtums, *JdI* 105 (1990) 155-165; *Lembke 1994*, 57-58; G. Sauron, *Quis Deum?: l'expression plastique des idéologies politiques et religieuses à Rome à la fin de la république et au debut du principat* (1994) 108-111, 131-133 and S. Gatti, La diffusione del culto di Iside: Praeneste, in: *Iside*, 332-334.

[380] Cf. also sv. cat. no. 006.

[381] Cf. S. De Caro (most recently in), Iside nei Campi Flegrei, in: *Iside*, 348-351 and for a convincing refutation of his reconstruction of an Egyptian temple M. Gigante, Un Iseo a Cuma, *RM* 102 (1995) 317-319.

[382] Cf. *Malaise 1972a*, 284-291 sv. Puteoli especially sv. nos. 23-30; also for the preserved Aegyptiaca which may support the inscription.

So far for a critical discussion of the postulated temples for Egyptian gods in Italy in the most recent synthesis. An overview of all hypothetical temples ever mentioned in literature is much more extensive. Malaise suggests, for instance, apart from a large number of the above possibilities, the existence of cult places in Alba, Catania, Marina, Forum Popilii, Herculaneum, and Reggio[386]. Based on inscriptions, the existence of about 20 sanctuaries is postulated in the fortcoming *Atlas de la diffusion des cultes isiaques*[387].

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[383] Cf. J. D'Arms, Puteoli in the 2nd. century AD, *JRS* 64 (1974) 104-124; *Pensa 1999*, 97-99 and, also for this remarkable group in general, S.E Ostrow, The topography of Puteoli and Baiae on 8 glass flasks, *Puteoli* 3 (1979) 77-140.

[384] Cf. for this sanctuary also cat. no. 061 and the literature mentioned there. For its building history and chronology see most recently N. Blanc, H. Eristov, M. Fincker, *A fundamento restituit?* Réfections dans le temple d'Isis à Pompéi, *RA* 2/2000, 227-309 who propose to reconstruct only an Augustan phase prior to the rebuilding; the origins of the complex would thus not go back to the early first century BC as is often conjectured.

[385] Cf. *Müller 1969*; *Malaise 1972a*, 294-305 sv. Beneventum and R. Pirelli, L'iseo di Benevento, in: *Iside*, 376-380.

Public sanctuaries thus form a possible context for Egyptian and egyptianising artefacts found in Italy, though a number of hypotheses need to be investigated critically. The other important religious context is formed by the materialisations of the private worship of the Nilotic gods. There was a large and diverse number of followers of the cults of the Egyptian gods, with which the Aegyptiaca should perhaps be connected. Archaeological indications testifying to private worship are, for instance, lararia with depictions of the Egyptian gods[388]. A large part of the (archaeological) material collected in the many overviews concerns this private, small-scale worship of Egyptian gods. Onomastics play a prominent role here: the occurrence of names such as *Isidorus*, *Serapion*, etc. is innumerable. This and other epigraphic material has been studied extensively because it was hoped that it could answer sociological questions, such as, e.g., who exactly were the followers of the Egyptian gods in the Roman Empire. It appears that this group certainly did not consist largely of women and slaves, as was often alleged in the past, and that people from eastern origin played an important, but not a dominant role[389]. It has also become clear that Isis was by far the most popular among the Egyptian gods, followed by Sarapis, and at some distance the other gods[390]. The many inscriptions are in fact not Aegyptiaca themselves, but in the study of the Egyptian and egyptianising artefacts in Italy, the existence of the context to which they attest is important.

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[386] *Malaise 1972a*, Index des sites sv.; in none of these cases there seems in fact to be decisive evidence.

[387] To the examples here discussed are added: a sanctuary for Isis in Falerii (cf. *RICIS* 511/0401); Tusculum (cf. *RICIS* 5031/0502, already to be dated to the Republican period); Minturnae (cf. *RICIS* 502/0201) and Terracina (cf. *RICIS* 502/0702).

[388] As an illustration and well preserved example may serve the lararium in the so-called Casa degli Amorini Dorati in Pompeii (VI 16, 7), which shows on one of the two backwalls a painting with Isis, Sarapis, Horus and Anubis (see *Pompei* V, 764-767), cf. for more examples in Pompeii *Malaise 1972a*, 275.

[389] Cf. *Takács 1995*, 1-7.

[390] Cf. the overviews of L. Vidman, *Sylloge inscriptionum religionis Isiacae et Sarapiacae* (1969); *Mora 1990*, and, most recently, *RICIS*.

1.1.3 *Non-religious contexts*

Besides (archaeological) material connected with temples (inscriptions; statues and statuettes of Isis, other Egyptian gods and Egyptian themes; reliefs and architectural fragments; paintings) and material testifying to worship in general (mainly inscriptions, but also statues of Egyptian gods; reliefs; paintings), we can also find in the different corpora Aegyptiaca which are not attributed to a religious context. Malaise, for instance, mentions a nymphaeum in Rome which was amongst other things decorated with statues of Isis and Sarapis, gardens on the Pincio in Rome adorned with Egyptian and egyptianising statues, and the amphitheatre in Capua which was decorated on the outside with a bust of Isis[391]. These cases also include statues and statuettes of Isis, other Egyptian gods and Egyptian themes; reliefs; and paintings. As one of the most notable examples of a not directly religious context, the villa of Hadrian near Tivoli is usually mentioned (cf. Ch. I 2.3), while also egyptianising statues of a pharaoh and of Osiris-Canopus, found in the villa of Domitian near Monte Circeo, are characterised by most authors as decoration of the corresponding gardens[392]. Finally, as to a number of obelisks preserved in Rome, it is usually assumed that they did not fulfill directly religious functions and served, for instance, as sundials or decorations in a circus.

However, in order to get a good overview of these non-religious contexts and the corresponding artefacts, the corpora do not suffice; in the introduction of the here presented overview of Aegyptiaca that selective presentation of the available material was already pointed out. Essays on the context and meaning of Aegyptiaca which do not seem to have a direct link with the cults of the Egyptian gods are therefore rare. A few exceptions will therefore be briefly discussed. In a study of the occurrence of depictions of Blacks on the Adriatic coast, Budischovsky draws the conclusion that this kind of exotica occurs everywhere, but especially in the large ports, such as Salonae and Aquileia: "les ports s'ouvrent à l'influence égyptienne au niveau des objets, des hommes et des idées"[393]. In an article on aspects of the Egyptian influence in Campania, Del Francia attempts to include all Aegyptiaca in her analysis, and not only the religious testimonials. She notes a relatively extensive occurrence during the 9th and 8th century BC, whereby the meaning can be diverse, from magical to exotic[394]. Subsequently, Aegyptiaca and Egyptian influences become especially popular again from the beginning of imperial times. Del Francia observes that the original meaning of the elements changes and she sees above all a connection with the Dionysiac associations in the Roman world[395]. Merkelbach argues that a number of Greek myths in Pompeiian houses should in fact be interpreted as Egyptian[396]. These depictions in the private context of a house can therefore be seen as Aegyptiaca, as they indeed evoked an association with the Nile country[397].

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[391] Cf. *Malaise 1972a*, (respectively) 178-179 sv. 331-332, 182-183 sv. 338 and 249 sv. 3.

[392] For the Villa Hadriana see the literature mentioned in Ch. I 2.3, n. 72. For the Aegyptiaca of the villa of Domitian cf. *Roullet 1972*, 3 and 51.

[393] *Budischovsky 1978*, 198. The Black is in fact of course not specifically Egyptian, but he was regarded as such in the Roman world: "l'esclave noir, pour les

It should furthermore be emphasised that a large number of Egyptian and egyptianising artefacts or motifs from non-religious contexts has not found a place yet in whichever of the inventories or essays discussed. The Nilotic scenes seem to be the most obvious example of this, but there are more: in Herculaneum, for instance, folding stools have been found with bronze legs shaped like ibis heads, while also table legs shaped like a cobra are known[398].

It should be concluded that Egyptian and egyptianising artefacts found in Italy can also originate from non-religious contexts, and that this origin of the material, as an alternative to a religious context, is not taken into consideration sufficiently.

1.1.4 *Synthesis*

The overview of Italian Aegyptiaca and their origin shows in the first place that the exact context, and thereby the meaning, of a large

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Romains, devait passer essentiellement pour un nilotique" (*L'image du noir*, 264). Pictures of darkskinned Blacks and black slaves can therefore, mutatis mutandis, perhaps be regarded as Aegyptiaca. They occur in the period of the fifth to third century BC, and thereafter from the beginning of imperial times when there was much direct contact between the Orient and the Adriatic Sea.

[394] Cf. section 1.1.1 for support of this conclusion.

[395] *Del Francia 1991.*

[396] *Merkelbach 1997. Wild 1981*, 76-84 earlier stated such an interpretation in relation to the stucco reliefs which decorate the purgatorium of the temple of Isis in Pompeii and show Perseus/Andromeda and Mars/Venus.

[397] Of course, an adherent to the Egyptian gods could have lived in the house; in that case a religious meaning of the depiction would be possible.

[398] Cf. S.T.A.M. Mols, *Wooden furniture in Herculaneum. Form, technique and function* (1999) 102.

part of the Egyptian and egyptianising artefacts in Italy is unclear. In the discussion of the material, it was shown that usually a religious context is reconstructed—either public or private—and that sometimes a not directly religious context may be assumed. A serious problem is that these reconstructions are made on the basis of the same (archaeological) material and that there do not seem to be any constants in the interpretation. For instance: the find of a statue of Isis can lead both to the reconstruction of a temple and to the reconstruction of a shrine for the goddess in the house of a follower of the cult, as well as to the reconstruction of a garden in an egyptianising atmosphere.

This issue is well illustrated by the discussions on the reconstruction of sanctuaries for Egyptian gods in Italy, which also for that reason have been debated more extensively. Firstly, there is no consensus about the question on the basis of which series of artefacts a sanctuary may be reconstructed. Can the find of a sistrum automatically lead to the assumption of an Isis temple? In the investigation of the Aegyptiaca in Rome (see section 2) it will be shown that sistra occur in all kinds of (different) contexts—sistra have also been found in tombs and houses—and that the above question should therefore be answered negatively. An archaeological definition of an Egyptian sanctuary is therefore lacking. Secondly, it appears that such a definition is also lacking in a more general sense. Can the find of an Isis statue among some very modest architectural remains lead to the reconstruction of a public sanctuary with a temple and other religious facilities, priests, etc.? Even the brief discussion of the religious contexts (section 1.1.2) has already shown that also this question should be answered negatively. Usually only a cultic presence can be demonstrated, whereby it could also concern a chapel or *fanum* in a house or the sanctuary of another god. Hence, when presenting an overview it is preferable to interpret critically, to leave room for doubt, and to have the diversity of the material reflected in the reconstruction[399]. All in all, a totally different picture emerges from the overview in table 10.

In five towns public sanctuaries for the Egyptian gods can be reconstructed with certainty, there was a modest shrine in three towns,

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[399] General indications such as 'Iseum' should therefore be specified as much as possible.

Table 10. Overview of a critical interpretation of 14 so-called sanctuaries for Egyptian gods in Italy.

public sanctuary	*shrine*	*cultic presence*	*Aegyptiaca*
Rome, IC/Serapeum	Florence	Verona	Industria
Ostia	Fiesole	Aquileia	Palestrina
Pozzuoli	Nemi	Portus	Cuma
Pompeii			
Benevento			

while in another three cases only a cultic presence can be determined and it could therefore concern a sanctuary, shrine or, in some cases, private worship. And lastly, in the reconstruction of three sanctuaries, a cultic presence cannot at all be proven with certainty and for the time being the presence of Aegyptiaca in a general sense thus has to be postulated. This reconstruction therefore provides a much less unequivocal, more diverse and more complex image.

This conclusion in fact applies to the whole group of Aegyptiaca. From the above overview it emerges that the group of Egyptian and egyptianising artefacts from not specifically religious contexts is much larger than realised so far. It should therefore be assumed that this context forms a more serious alternative in the interpretation than has been the case. These two observations complicate the question about the meaning of Aegyptiaca even more: on the basis of the same archaeological material, two, seemingly opposite, contexts can be reconstructed which themselves are also not unequivocal. This large variety of contexts—and therefore possible meanings—similarly emerges from an overview of the occurrence of Aegyptiaca outside Italy, presented per region in the following sections.

1.2 *North Africa*

Relatively few Aegyptiaca have been found in the African provinces of the Roman Empire[400]. In Cyrene, capital of the province of Cyrenaica, there were already temples for Isis and Sarapis as early as the fourth century BC due to direct contacts with Egypt. An Isis temple which was part of an Apollo sanctuary, was used until the fourth century AD. A probably more important sanctuary was located on the acropolis of the town; this temple had an Egyptian clergy and may have been used until the fifth century AD[401]. Other sanctuaries for Egyptian gods are known in Bulla Regia, Carthago, Byrsa and, all founded in the second century AD, Lambesis, Lepcis Magna and Sabratha. There is also a series of oil lamps from the third and fourth century AD depicting Isis and Sarapis[402]. Hornborstel concluded that there was no great interest in Sarapis in North Africa; this seems to apply to the Egyptian gods in general[403]. In Ptolemais, also in Cyrenaica, the so-called 'palazzo delle colonne' has been preserved; a huge domus that covered a whole insula in the centre of the ancient town. Apart from Graeco-Roman statues, also a number of Egyptian sculptures was found in the house: some larger fragments with inscriptions and many smaller fragments[404]. An exceptional egyptianising context is formed by ancient Cherchell, capital of the province of Mauretania, from the end of the first century BC. King Iuba II (25 BC—23 AD) was married to the Ptolemaic Cleopatra Selene, who tried to emulate an Egyptian atmosphere in her new homeland; Pliny tells that she had an Iseum built with a basin for the holy crocodiles, just as in Egypt[405].

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[400] A first overview was given by St. Gsell, Les cultes égyptiens dans le Nord-Ouest de l'Afrique sous l'Empire romain, *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 30 (59) (1909) 149-159, followed by the monograph of M. LeGlay, *Les religions orientales dans l'Afrique ancienne* (1956). The most recent synthesis is *Tiradritti 1997*, 545-549. All inventories are aimed at the cults of the Egyptian gods. See for further literature the *Atlas*, 78, 82 and 86: orientations bibliographiques.

1.3 *European provinces*

A reconstruction of the diffusion of the Egyptian cults based on the Aegyptiaca found in the European provinces of the Roman Empire is provided by Malaise in a contribution which forms a sequel to his monograph on Italy[406]. He draws the conclusion there that the situation differs much per province. The Iberian peninsula and France were, besides via Italy, also directly influenced via trade contacts and Easterners. In Great Britain, the emporium Londinium played a determining role and Roman traders were therefore the intermediaries, as was the case in Germania, which was introduced to the Egyptian gods via the Rhine. Malaise sees Aquileia "grand centre isiaque" as an important source[407]. The Danube provinces mainly came into contact with Isis and the Egyptian gods through military and administrative channels.

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[401] Cf. S. Ensoli Vittozzi, Indagine sul culto di Iside a Cirene, in: A. Mastino (ed.), *L'Africa Romana. Atti del IX convegno di studio (Nuoro 1991)* (1992) 167-250.

[402] Cf. J.J.V.M. Derksen, Isis and Sarapis on lamps from North Africa, in: *Hommages Vermaseren* I, 296-304.

[403] *Hornborstel 1973*, 244-247.

[404] Cf. G. Pesce, *Il 'palazzo delle colonne' in Tolemaide di Cirenaica* (1950), sv. nos. 24-50 and, most recently, M. D'Este, Sculture egizie ed egittizzanti nel Museo di Tolemaide, in: *La Cirenaica in età antica. Atti del convegno internazionale di studi 1995* (1998) 177-185 for the Aegyptiaca. On the interpretation *Neudecker 1988*, 35 n. 340: "Im Palazzo delle Colonne von Ptolemais ist hingegen ein persönlicher oder religiöser Bezug zu den ägyptischen Statuen möglich (–)".

[405] Pliny, *N.H.* 5, 51. See, in general, M. Coltelloni-Trannoy, *Le royaume de Maurétanie sous Juba II et Ptolémée* (1997)

[406] *Malaise 1984*.

In Hispania, Aegyptiaca have been found scattered over the whole country. Three concentrations attract attention: Roman Baetica, the trading towns on the eastern Mediterranean coast, and a number of towns in the northwest of the country: three relatively romanised areas. It concerns mainly marble statues and statuettes, small bronzes, terracottas and Egyptian utensils. The Isis cult was already introduced into Roman Spain in the first century BC, but it probably remained a Roman affair; there are no indications for a dissemination among the indigenous population. A sanctuary for the Egyptian gods in Ampurias probably dates from the period around 100 BC; in addition, a sanctuary for Isis came to light in ancient Bolonia[408]. Recently the existence of an Iseum in Itálica was postulated[409]. From the period before Romanisation a large number of Egyptian artefacts has been preserved, which probably arrived in Spain via trade contacts. It concerns mainly scarabs and cameos, also occasionally a small head of Bes or a fragment of a sphinx[410].

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[407] *Malaise 1984*, 1683.

[408] Cf. the overview in *Malaise 1984*, 1648-1651, which is mainly based on the *EPRO* volume by A. García y Bellido, *Les religions orientales dans l'Espagne romaine* (1967) and *Clerc 1997*, 530-531. A number of articles in the conference volume *La religion romana en Hispania* (1981) also gives an overview of the material and part-synthesis: M. Bendala Galán, Las religiones mistéricas en la Espanga romana, 283-299; J. Alvar, El culto a Isis en Hispania; C.G. Wagner, J. Alvar, El culto de Sarapis en Hispania, 321-333; J. Padro Parcerisa, Las divinidades egipcias en la Hispania Romana y sus precedentes. The numismatic material is discussed by Ma. Paz García-Bellido, Las religiones orientales en la peninsula iberica: documentos numismaticos I, *AEspA* 64 (1991) 37-81. For further references see the *Atlas*, 90 sv. Péninsule ibérique : orientations bibliographiques.

[409] See *RICIS* 602/0201-0205, with further references.

[410] The material is collected in J. Padró i Parcerisa, *Egyptian-type documents from the Mediterranean littoral of the Iberian peninsula before the Roman conquest* I (1980), II (1983), III (1985). An announced synthesis and conclusion have not yet been published. The author assumes a clearly religious meaning of the material (I, xi "(–) absolutely every one of them has a religious significance"), and supposes that the Egyptian gods in the first millennium BC had a great influence on the population of the

In Gallia, Egyptian and egyptianising artefacts were found in particular along the large rivers and other important channels of communication. Towns on the Mediterranean coast and in the Rhone valley already came into contact with the Egyptian gods in the beginning of the Empire; only in the second century AD Aegyptiaca were dispersed over the whole of Roman France. The group of French Aegyptiaca consists mainly of objects from the second and third century AD, and again the context of the (archaeological) material is unclear in the majority of cases. Sanctuaries for Egyptian gods have not been preserved but they can be reconstructed with reasonable certainty in Nimes and Arles; in a number of towns there seems to have been an organised cult. Terracotta utensils on which Isis and Sarapis are depicted, occur throughout southern France[411]. An overview of the Egyptian and egyptianising artefacts found in the Roman provinces of Pannonia and Illyricum shows that a relatively large number has been found in Salonae[412]. On the basis of an inscription on a large bronze statue of Isis, only preserved in an 18th century description, the presence of a sanctuary for the goddess can be assumed. Furthermore relatively many statues of Osiris and shabties were found in the seaport, as well as lamps, cameos, scarabs, etc. Aegyptiaca are rare in the other parts of Dalmatia; it concerns some inscriptions and a few lamps and amulets. In Roman Poetovio a number of votive inscriptions and an altar for Isis were found. In ancient Mursa, a stele with hieroglyphs and a shabti have been preserved, which are interpreted as souvenirs of soldiers returning from Egypt. The palace of Diocletian in Split had some Egyptian elements in the decoration: Egyptian granite columns were imported for the peristyle and the porticus of the mausoleum, and a number of sphinxes were erected on either side of the steps lead-

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Iberian peninsula. This assumption in such an absolute sense is for various reasons unlikely. Only very few clearly religious artefacts have been preserved from the first millennium BC, and moreover the exact context of the material is usually unknown. Hölbl, on the basis of a study of comparable Italian and Punic material from the same period, reaches in his publications of 1979 and 1986 a more nuanced conclusion, cf. section 1.1.1.

[411] A synthesis of the material found in France is given in *Malaise 1984*, 1651-1659 with all previous literature, *Clerc 1997*, 531-532 and *Atlas*, 96. For a recent find of oil lamps with pictures of the Egyptian gods cf. J.-L. Podvin, Nouvelles lampes égyptisants de la vallée du Rhône, *RA* 1999, 79-88.

[412] Cf. *Budischovsky 1977*; P. Selem, *Les religions orientales dans la Pannonie romaine (partie en Yougoslavie)* (1980); *Malaise 1984*, 1669-1671 and *Clerc 1997*, 535-536.

ing to the mausoleum[413]. In Roman Hungary some Egyptian bronzes, utensils and a few reliefs have been preserved. There was an Egyptian sanctuary in Savaria, economic centre of Pannonia superior. Aquincum is notable for the find of relatively many utensils with depictions of Isis and the Egyptian gods, as well as the presence of two mummies in a grave which should probably be dated to c. AD 300[414].

A relatively large number of sanctuaries for the Egyptian gods have survived in Greece[415]. As the Isis cult and Egyptian culture seem to have reached Greece directly from Egypt, the occurrence of Aegyptiaca is partly different from most other provinces of the Roman Empire, who were introduced to the Egyptian gods and culture via the Romans. In the fourth and third century BC, there are already large sanctuaries for Egyptian gods in Piraeus, Eretria and on Delos. Also in the third, and in the second century BC there were sanctuaries in Thessaloniki, Demetrias and several Boeotian cities. The testimonies from the Roman period match poorly with the many testimonia from the Hellenistic period; it is not yet clear how this should be explained.

1.4 *Near Eastern provinces*

Also in this area an exchange of goods in the second and first millennium BC is documented, amongst them Aegyptiaca (cf. section 1.1.1)[416]. The distribution of the cult of Isis over the eastern Mediteranean basin has been discussed by Dunand[417]. On Cyprus the Egyptian and other eastern gods never seem to have gained a foothold[418]. A lot of testimonies which can be connected with Egyptian gods have been preserved in Roman Syria and Palestina. The major part of the (archaeological) material is, however, isolated and dispersed[419]. Aegyptiaca in a broader sense occur much more frequently as the Levant and Egypt are geographically close and they were part, already in the first millennium BC, of the same (Phoenician) trade system. However, Aegyptiaca from a Roman context are rare.

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[413] Three sphinxes can be identified with certainty, cf. J.J. Wilkes, *Diocletian's palace, Split: residence of a retired roman emperor* (1986) 20-22. Cf. for the Egyptian elements in general still G. Jéquier, Les monuments égyptiens de Spalato (Dalmatie), in: E. Hebrand, J. Leiller, *Spalato, le palais de Dioclétien* (1912), and J. Leclant, *Orientalia* (1955) 311 and (1964) 395-396.

[414] Cf. V. Wessetzky, *Die ägyptischen Kulte zur Römerzeit in Ungarn* (1961); L. Vidman, Der ägyptische Kult in den Donauprovinzen, *ANRW* 18,2 (1989) 975-1013; *Clerc 1997* 536-538 and *Atlas*, 124.

[415] *Dunand 1973* II: *le culte d'Isis en Grèce.* Important additions: Ph. Bruneau, *Le sanctuaire et le culte des divinités égyptiennes à Érétrie* (1975); *Clerc 1997*, 526-527 and L. Bricault, Les cultes isiaques en Grèce centrale et occidentale, *ZPE* 119 (1997) 117-122. See now also M. Bommas, Neue Heimat in der Fremde. Isis in Makedonien, *AW* 31 (2000) 617-623 and *Atlas*, 2, 6, 10 and 14.

[416] A bronze sistrum with pictures of Hathor from the ninth to seventh century BC, probably manufactured in Syria/Palestina and found in the sanctuary of Syme on Crete, is an exemplary and recently published example. Cf. A. Lambropoulou, A bronze sistrum from the sanctuary of Syme/Crete, *AA* 1999, 515-521.

[417] *Dunand 1973* III: *le culte d'Isis en Asie Mineure. Clergé et rituel des sanctuaires isiaques.*

Hölbl published a large number of Aegyptiaca from the west coast of Turkey; most recently Aegyptiaca found in the Aphrodite temple near Miletos and dating from the 7th century BC[420]. Concerning the meaning and distribution of the material, a number of his observations are notable. Hölbl regards some Aegyptiaca as votive offerings by soldiers returning from Egypt. Furthermore, the majority of the scarabs among the material does not come from Egypt but is egyptianising and is interpreted as "von der volkstümlichen ägyptischen Magie geprägte Kulturelementen"[421]. In general Aegyptiaca found in this area date to the Ptolemaic period. Testimonies from the Roman period are relatively few.

1.5 *Synthesis and conclusion*

An investigation of the Aegyptiaca from Roman Italy (section 1.1) has demonstrated that these are often not found in situ and that the original context should therefore be reconstructed in order to begin to discover the meaning of the object. Two possibilities are usually suggested for this reconstruction: a religious context, either public (a sanctuary) or private, or a non-religious context. The overview of the occurrences of Aegyptiaca in the other parts of the Imperium Romanum (section 1.2-1.4) has illustrated that also in these areas the artefacts are often without context and interpretations are diverse. Roughly the same kind of material is found in all parts of the

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[418] This is the conclusion of I. Michaelidou-Nicolaou, The cult of oriental divinities in Cyprus, in: *Hommages Vermaseren* II, 791-800. This synthesis is more convincing than the one by *Dunand 1973* III, 119-122, who reconstructs a strong presence of the Egyptian gods on Cyprus, for which she bases herself solely on a Serapeum in Soloi from the third century AD. Cf. also *Clerc 1997*, 527-530 and *Atlas*, 42.

[419] Cf. *Dunand 1973* III, 122-135; *Tiradritti 1997*, 543-544 and *Atlas*, 70.

[420] *Hölbl 1999*, cf. 345 for references to earlier publications on Aegyptiaca in this area. See now also *Atlas*, 54 and 64.

[421] *Hölbl 1999*, 354.

Roman world: statues and statuettes of Egyptian gods, votive reliefs, terracottas of or with Egyptian objects, amongst them lamps with Egyptian gods and scenes, paintings with Egyptian motifs, reliefs with religious scenes and plates and dishes in an Egyptian style. For the time being constants have only been suggested in a very general manner between the occurrence of a certain category of (archaelogical) material or of a specific combination of artefacts and a specific context. It is clear that a votive relief indicates worship, but even then it is often impossible to ascertain whether it concerns public worship on a large scale, on a modest scale or private worship. The overview of the Roman Aegyptiaca in and outside Italy has also shown that, apart from temples and private cult places, there are various non-religious contexts for the material: the Villa Hadriana, ancient Cherchell in the beginning of the first century AD, the palace of Diocletian in Split, ancient Mursa, where soldiers having returned from Egypt possibly lived, etc.

The Egyptian goddess Isis was very popular in the Roman world. This popularity is reflected in the archaeological material. It seems therefore reasonable to connect Aegyptiaca with the cult of the Egyptian gods. Elements of the Egyptian culture as such were apparently also popular in the Roman world. This popularity is reflected in the archaeological material, only seemingly far less than the religious interest. The most important conclusion of this section is that for a large part of the research tradition the reconstruction of the meaning of Aegyptiaca is almost a-priori religious. A one-sided and distorted image has thus been created about the meaning of Aegyptiaca Romana. The context of a large part of the Egyptian and egyptianising artefacts in the Roman world is unknown and in the reconstruction of the meaning both a religious and a non-religious context should be taken into consideration. Although, as the next section will show, the relation between context and meaning needs not be unequivocal—an Egyptian object in a non-religious context can quite well have a cultic meaning—it is essential to first investigate that context meticulously.

Thus, at first sight, our interpretation of the Nilotic landscapes does not correspond with the interpretative framework of Egyptian and egyptianising artefacts in the Roman world in general, because they are primarily not religious. After this critical examination it can be concluded, however, that the Nilotic scenes are precisely typical Aegyptiaca because their meaning strongly depends on the context.

The Nilotic scenes seem to be at the non-religious end of the spectrum of meanings. It is quite conceivable that, for instance, statues of Isis are at the religious end of that spectrum: primarily they should be interpreted in connection with the Egyptian cults, but other meanings are also possible.

With these prudent conclusions based on the presented overview, the definition of the meaning of Aegyptiaca in the Roman world has become even more complex. As with the investigation of (possible) public sanctuaries for the Egyptian gods in Italy (section 1.1.2), it appears that in fact the reconstruction is far less equivocal than is usually assumed: an artefact without a context can hypothetically be put in five different places in the spectrum of meanings. For example: a small bronze statue of Isis may have belonged to a sanctuary, can testify to private devotion, can have served as souvenir to a soldier, can represent merchandise to a merchant and can be regarded as eastern exotica by an ordinary Roman. Although such a conclusion is valuable in itself, it still remains unsatisfactory because it is not very concrete. In order to test the ideas formulated here, a case study will be carried out on the basis of the Aegyptiaca from the city of Rome. An attempt will be made, through investigation of the objects themselves and the context in which they functioned, to discover their primary meaning.

2 *An example further investigated: Rome*

"En 1617 on trouva dans le contexte attenant à l'église de S. Marcello, sur le Corso, les restes d'un édifice qui parut être un temple. On crut reconnaître celui d'Isis, qui mentionnait une inscription, mise en jour, disait-on, en cet endroit, et qui était ainsi conçue: TEMPLUM ISIS EXORATAE. Canina suspecte non seulement la provenance, mais même l'authenticité de ce document. Depuis il a été declaré faux."[422]

In the past centuries, the Egyptian gods have been very dominant in the interpretation of Aegyptiaca, as can be ascertained once more from the above quotation. However, there are numerous possibilities for the interpretation of Aegyptiaca Romana, especially when the context is not known. Yet it is not true that the associations of the different ancient observers cannot, at least partly, been reconstructed; in some cases they are evident. The marble statue of a standing Isis, found in the temple of Isis in Pompeii, complete with an inscription mentioning the name of the dedicant, is, as may be assumed on the basis of this information, a votive offering from a L. Caecilius Phoebus, who therefore may be seen as a participant in the cult[423].

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[422] *Lafaye 1884*, 215.

An attempt will be made in this paragraph, on the basis of the detailed investigation of an example, the city of Rome, to see which associations occur most frequently and whether generalisations are possible concerning the relation between a specific category of material culture and a specific meaning. As has been demonstrated, the Nilotic scenes, a specific group of Aegyptiaca Romana, should primarily not be interpreted in relation to the cults of the Egyptian gods. It is conceivable that another specific group, for instance statues of the goddess Isis, an example of which was presented above, should be seen primarily in relation to the cults of the Egyptian gods. Only a detailed and critical investigation of all Egyptian and egyptianising monuments and artefacts from a defined area seems to make it possible to show such constants; contrary to the overview given in the previous section, which only demonstrated the existence of various as well as different kinds of contexts.

Rome was chosen as a case study for a number of reasons. A large number of Egyptian and egyptianising monuments and artefacts have been found or preserved in the city. Moreover, these have been collected and interpreted in two, partly overlapping, inventories[424]. Furthermore, in relation to the total database of preserved Aegyptiaca Romana from the Roman world, a large part of the material has been preserved in the city of Rome. We may therefore expect logically, also because it concerns the capital of the Imperium, that Rome will show the largest diversity in potential contexts. There are, partly for the same reasons, also disadvantages to Rome as a specific example. The city, as centre of the Mediterranean world at that time, was exceptional in many respects and furthermore, public and monumental contexts are overrepresented in the archaeological finds in relation to houses and other more humble contexts. The possibility to generalise from the conclusions obtained may therefore not be assumed right away, and will be discussed further in the conclusion.

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[423] Cf. for this statue (MN, Napels 976), dated c. 100 BC, *Tran Tam Tinh 1964*, sv. no. 81; *Malaise 1972a*, 267-268 sv. Pompei 33; *Alla ricerca di Iside*, 68 and *Iside*, 428 sv. V. 46. Cf. for the inscription *CIL*, X, 849/*RICIS* 504/0205.

[424] *Malaise 1972a* and *Roullet 1972*. See for both publications also section 2.1.2 of this chapter.

2.1 *Egyptian and egyptianising artefacts in Rome*

2.1.1 *Introduction*

As early as the Middle Ages, we know of an interest in the Roman Aegyptiaca, as part of the much more general fascination for remains from the classical, Roman city. For instance, the 11th century version of the *Mirabilia Urbis Romae* mentions various pyramids and obelisks, which were then regarded as graves of famous Romans. Egyptian and egyptianising sphinxes and lions served the so-called Cosmati in the 13th century as example in the construction of decorative elements for churches and courtyards of monasteries[425]. Amongst other things because of their different appearance and the association with the Pharaonic civilisation of the mysterious country on the banks of the Nile, the Egyptian and egyptianising monuments and artefacts attracted attention. Some never disappeared under the ground and formed part of the sights of the city. The miniature made by Pol de Limbourg shows a map of Rome depicted in a bird's eye view with the most important curiosities in that period, amongst them pyramids and a large obelisk on its side[426]. Also the so-called Vaticanus, an obelisk, brought by Octavian from Heliopolis to the newly constructed Forum Iulium in Alexandria, and later shipped to Rome by Caligula, to be erected in the Circus Vaticanus, remained visible from this re-erection until today; until 1586 at the spot of the old Circus, among the pilgrims who located the tomb of Peter there, and after the relocation in that year on the square in front of the new S. Pietro[427].

Especially these obelisks attracted attention, which was of course also caused by the enigmatic hieroglyphs visible on the monuments. Already quite early studies were made of the obelisks present in Rome and a learned discussion developed on the meaning of the hieroglyphs. In 1589 Michele Mercati published his treatise *De gli obelischi di Roma*, and also Athanasius Kircher's three volume *Oedipus Aegyptiacus* (1652-1654), with a brilliant yet totally unrealistic deciphering proposition, as well as Georg Zoega's *De origine et usu obeliscorum* from 1797 should be mentioned[428]. The prominent position which the obelisks occupied among the antiquities preserved in Rome seems well illustrated by the famous painting of J.W. von Goethe 'nella campagna Romana', painted by J.H.W. Tischbein (1751-1829) in 1786/87. The painting shows Goethe in a 'Kulturlandschaft' constructed by Tischbein, in which some of the curiosities of (the surroundings of) Rome were depicted metaphorically. It seems to concern here primarily symbols referring to the personal perception of the two friends; for instance, the marble relief fragment with Orestes, Pylades and Iphigenia refers to Goethe's tragedy *Iphigenie auf Tauris*, which he completed during his stay in Rome, as well as to its reading by the author to a group of intimates, among whom Tischbein. Yet the painting also shows in a more general sense the German 'Bildungsreisender', among the characteristic remains of ancient Rome with the Alban mountains in the background. The painting became not without reason a symbol of *the* German/European intellectual in *the* country of the spiritual renaissance. Remains from Antiquity are naturally prominently present and therefore also form a reflection of the antiquities preserved in and around Rome in general, with Goethe depicted lying on fragments of an obelisk[429].

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[425] See, e.g., the typically smiling sphinxes in the courtyards of the monasteries of the S. Giovanni in Laterano and the S. Lorenzo fuori le mura. Cf. *Roullet 1972*, 7-9 for other examples of 13th century sphinxes and lions.

[426] Ms. *Très riches heures du duc de Berry*, fol. 141 v. (Musée Condé, Chantilly); cf. M. Thomas, *Les grandes heures de Jean Duc de Berry (Bibl. Nat. Paris ms lat 919). Introduction and legends* (1971).

[427] For this obelisk cf. *Iversen 1968*, 19-46 and G. Alföldy, Der Obelisk auf der Petersplatz in Rom. Ein historisches Monument der Antike, *Sitzungsber. Heidelb. Ac. Wiss., phil.-hist. klasse* 1990-2 (1990).

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[428] Cf. *Iversen 1968* (in fact dedicated to his compatriot Georg Zoega) sv. index and E. Iversen, *The myth of Egypt and its hieroglyphs in European tradition* (1961). The German Jesuit Athanasius Kircher, who was in his lifetime regarded as one of the greatest and most universal scholars of his time, occupied himself intensively with Aegyptiaca Romana.

[429] The painting (164 x 206) is in the Städelisches Kunstinstitut in Frankfurt/M. In a drawing of an earlier version (now in the Goethe Museum in Weimar), the obelisk fragments are much easier to recognise as such by the depiction of the hieroglyphs. Cf. in general C. Beutler, *W. Tischbein. Goethe in der Campagna* (1962) and specifically K. Parlasca, Iphigenie in Tauris. Ein Beitrag zu J.W. Goethe, W. Tischbein und B. West, in: *Festschrift Frank Brommer* (1977) 231-236, in which the question is further examined which Roman obelisk has served as an example for the painting. As said before, the obelisk and the hieroglyphs are more clearly visible in an earlier version, and it therefore does not seem illogical in the first instance to assume that Tischbein made a drawing during his stay in Rome of an existing obelisk, which thus ended up in the painting. However, such a direct relation cannot be proven, as Parlasca already states. Goethe and Tischbein would certainly have seen the obelisk of the mausoleum of Octavian on the Campus Martius,

Together with the obelisks, the so-called Iseum Campense attracted much attention. The existence of this large temple of Isis on the Campus Martius was known from ancient texts and the remains of the decoration which were discovered around S. Maria sopra Minerva in the course of the centuries. The first documented find of Aegyptiaca on the spot of the classical sanctuary dates back to the 15th century, and in the middle of the 17th century Athanasius Kircher included a reconstruction of this "vetus fanum Isidis" in his *Oedipus aegytiacus* mentioned earlier[430]. In the following centuries many of the Aegyptiaca found in Rome would be connected, sometimes correctly, sometimes also speculatively, with this most well-known and most appealing Egyptian context in the city[431].

Besides the obelisks and the Iseum, the pyramid of Cestius is the third prominent Egyptian monument in Rome. The notable grave of the praetor Cestius from the end of the first century BC, which was integrated into the later Aurelian city wall, was known in the Middle Ages as 'Meta Remi' (the tomb of Remus), and is often depicted on maps of the city or otherwise. First and foremost, as the already mentioned miniature of Pol de Limbourg shows, because it was one of the outstanding remains of classical Rome, later because the Protestant cemetery with, amongst other things, the graves of Keats and Shelley extended at the foot of the pyramid, which made it into a picturesque entity[432].

Preserved or retrieved Aegyptiaca were frequently re-used in a contemporary context. The so-called obelisk of Domitian, which was originally erected in the centre of the monumental court of the Iseum

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excavated in 1748. They lived nearby, in the Corso, and moreover Goethe possessed casts of the reliefs on the pyramidion. The monument was only re-erected at the end of the 18th century and therefore had been lying on the Campus Martius for more than 40 years. Perhaps Goethe did indeed sit on the obelisk, as Parlasca suggests, and (additionally) thus the idea was created for the depiction in the painting. The original fragments are however much larger than those in the painting and moreover the obelisk concerned does not have three rows of hieroglyphs, as depicted in the painting. For Goethe's appreciation of Pharaonic Egyptian (material) culture in general (one is reminded of his well-known remark "Ich hasse die Aegypter und alles, was mit ihnen in Zusammenhang gebracht wird") see K.H. Dittmann, Goethe und die 'ägyptischen Sachen', *MDAIK* 12 (1943) 96-106.

[430] Page 7, reproduced by *Roullet 1972*, fig. 16 and *Lembke 1994*, Taf. 1,1.

[431] An origin from a famous antique temple could be used to increase the antiquarian value of the object; thus many Aegyptiaca were said to come from the temple on the Campus Martius. *Lembke 1994* gives a critical catalogue of objects which can actually be attributed to the sanctuary.

[432] For a discusion of this monument and references cf. section 2.7.5.

Campense, was placed after a design by Bernini in the 17th century on a sculpture group above the Fontana dei Quattro Fiumi and still decorates Piazza Navona. Many other obelisks, provided with new bases and usually adorned with Christian symbols, were also re-erected: in fact a second re-use of Egyptian monuments in Rome[433]. Another illustrative example of this practice is the pair of Egyptian lions still flanking Michelangelo's steps to the Capitol. They were found near S. Stefano del Cacco in the 15th century and most likely were part of the decoration of the Iseum Campense. Soon they were transported to the campus Lateranensis, where they flanked the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius for a while, a situation documented by drawings of Pisanello and Maarten van Heemskerck. When this statue was moved to the Capitol in 1538, the lions first returned to the S. Stefano del Cacco and were subsequently also brought to the Capitol by Pius VI in 1561, where they were, however, not reunited with the equestrian statue. In the reconstruction of the Capitol after a design by Michelangelo, the antiquities present were re-used in an impressive and subtle way; the lions were moved round 1570 to the bottom of the new steps, where they fulfill their function as water-spouting guards until today[434]. For the new rulers of Rome, Aegyptiaca were, apparently for various reasons, attractive monuments to embellish the city. It is obvious that with this second re-use, the function of the objects changed: the Egyptian lions from the early Ptolemaic period discussed above were, via the Roman Iseum Campense, transformed into decorative water-spouts in papal Rome. It is important to realise that the original function and meaning of the objects did therefore not necessarily remain the same also in the first re-use by the Romans. Not only the obelisks, but all Egyptian artefacts and monuments in Rome are in fact *in exile*, to use the evocative title of the series of books by Iversen[435]. In order to understand the associations linked to it, it will be necessary to investigate in particular their function in this new, Roman context. The function of Aegyptiaca in Rome is described here as 'first re-use'. It is important to realise, however, that we sometimes perhaps have to speak about this as being a second re-use. Recent French archaeological research in Alexandria has shown that in the Ptolemaic period Pharaonic monuments were re-used in the city. These monument were therefore probably on display as trophies of Ptolemaic (Greek) power over Pharaonic (native) Egypt. Entangled from their original context, these objects were first re-used in an Alexandrian context before being shipped to Rome (second re-use), where their re-erection by one of the popes was thus in fact already a third re-use.

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[433] See, in general, *Iversen 1968* and *Schama 1995*, 305 ff., with attention to Bernini specifically.

[434] Cf. *Ensoli 1990*, 71-85, with references and illustrations.

[435] *Obelisks in Exile*. Cf. *Iversen 1968*.

2.1.2 *Status quaestionis*

The French scholar Lafaye was one of the first, at the end of the 19th century, who, in a discussion of the Egyptian cults outside their homeland, paid systematic attention also to the archaeological material. Although his *Histoire du culte des divinités d'Alexandrie en dehors de l'Egypte*, published in 1884, is mainly based on literary and epigraphical information, a separate part of the publication is devoted to "les monuments", in which the Iseum of Pompeii, the 'Alexandrian' temples in Rome, and figurative representations of Egyptian gods are discussed. Just in that period, the second half of the 19th century and in particular the period after the unification of Italy in 1870, numerous Aegyptiaca were discovered among the many archaeological finds unearthed during the large-scale modernisation and development of the city. The publication clearly illustrates how the various Egyptian and egyptianising monuments and artefacts are automatically placed in a religious framework, due to the main theme of the book. Apart from the fact that in the first instance there was every reason for this, the circumstance that a temple, the Iseum Campense, was for centuries the only known Roman egyptianising context, with which many of the Aegyptiaca found in the city were associated, as well as the fact that the existence of more sanctuaries seemed evident on the basis of written sources, will have played a role in the religious interpretation of Aegyptiaca in general. Such an archaeological interpretation also fitted in well with the character of the 19th century research tradition, which in relation to the Egyptian culture in Italy was, for various reasons, as sketched in Ch. I 2.1, heavily focused on Isis. In Lafaye's valuable monograph Aegyptiaca Romana are thus used to underpin and illustrate the key argument on Egyptian cults in the Roman world. This view on Aegyptiaca found in the Roman world or in Rome itself would dominate the entire 20th century[436]. In the discussion of the status quaestionis of the Nilotic scenes, it has been demonstrated that in fact the existence of the Aegyptiaca Romana as an objective, descriptive category is thus neglected: the Egyptian and egyptianising monuments and artefacts concerned are a priori interpreted as directly connected with the cults of the Egyptian gods. That this view is to a large extent an interpretative framework which evolved as much from the research tradition as from the archaeological material, will be illustrated on the basis of a number of notable anomalies in 20th century discussions on Roman Aegyptiaca.

As far as the archaeological remains are concerned, at the beginning of that century the Iseum Campense in particular received much attention. Hülsen succeeded in 1903 in making a reconstruction of the plan of the sanctuary, which was adapted and extended in the following decades[437]. Otherwise it concerns mainly the publication of separate finds of Aegyptiaca in this period. Although many Egyptian sanctuaries were discovered in the Roman world, none came to light in Italy or Rome itself[438]. In an interpretative respect, the publication in 1929 of Cumont's *Les religions orientales dans le paganisme romain*, which is still regarded as a standard textbook, had a great influence as it advanced even stronger the specifically religious influence of Egypt and the East on the Roman world. By the publication of such a convincing and well-founded monograph on religious influences, the historical narration became as it were even more religiously coloured than it was already. Aegyptiaca Romana were now mainly studied in the frame of the 'études isiaques' and illustrated only now and then the scholarly discussions on subjects like the political relations between Italy and Egypt in the second and first centuries BC[439]. As mentioned in chapter I, research into the role of the Egyptian gods in the Roman world, as part of the interest in the role of oriental religions in general, received a boost in the 1950's by the efforts of Leclant and Vermaseren. Following

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[436] For an evaluation of the book by Lafaye and its scholary repercussions cf. *Mellor 1983*.

[437] Ch. Hülsen, Porticus Diuorum et Serapeum im Marsfelde, *RM* 18 (1903) 17-57; see also *Lembke 1994*, 15-17 for all previous literature in relation to this Iseum.

[438] Particularly striking are the finds and publications of Drexler (Danube area), Rusch (Greece) and Roussel (Delos). Cf. *Wild 1984*, 1742-1743 for further information and bibliographical references.

[439] For examples of this latter aspect cf. *Van 't Dack 1980*, 6-10.

Cumont, the religious-historical background, the oriental cults as parallel phenomena of Christianity, were primarily of importance there. In order to gain a better insight, the archaeological remains were collected and described, often by topographical region and by deity (Isis and the Egyptian gods, Cybele and Attis, etc.)[440].

This led to the publication in 1972 of two inventories on Egyptian and egyptianising monuments and artefacts in Rome: Malaise's *Inventaire préliminaire des documents égyptiens découverts en Italie* and Roullet's *The Egyptian and egyptianizing monuments of imperial Rome.* The artificial character of the dealing with the Aegyptiaca Romana, maintained for a century and further developed, is illustrated by both books[441]. Malaise's catalogue of "documents égyptiens" forms the basis, the factual material for a discussion on "les conditions de pénétration et de diffusion des cultes égyptiens en Italie": a natural, formal equation between 'Egyptian' and 'religious'. Through the intelligent, sober interpretation, it appears however that a number of Aegyptiaca should on the contrary not be interpreted directly in connection with the cults of the Egyptian gods. In the lucid introduction, Malaise enters at length into the problems of interpretation and warns: "(–) il faut destinguer le cultuel du culturel"[442]. He is one of the first to also attempt to apply this distinction in meaning to the archaeological material and to thus draw up a system for the meaning of Aegyptiaca:

> "Devant toutes ces difficultés d'interprétation nous avons non seulement repris les documents incontestablement isiaques (images de dieux, de fidèles et de prêtres; instruments cultuels) mais aussi les oeuvres égyptiennes ou égyptisantes que les Romains avaient pu intégrer à l'univers isiaque. Par ailleurs, nous avons écarté les objets où se décelait uniquement une influence égyptisante sur le seul plan stylistique."[443]

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[440] For the importance of Leclant and Vermaseren and their position within the discipline, see also Chapter I 2.1. The only two contributions in the field of archaeology outside the *EPRO* are a somewhat superficial and seldomly used Swiss dissertation in which the cult places of Isis in Rome are dealt with (*Tschudin 1962*), and a valuable monograph on the Egyptian sanctuary in Beneventum (*Müller 1969*), where a large and variable number of Aegyptiaca has been preserved and which is therefore important as a parallel to the sanctuaries in Rome.

[441] It is definitely not the intention to discredit the two valuable publications; I only attempt to place them in the scholarly tradition and to better understand this tradition on the basis of the attitude of these books towards the issue. Malaise's excellent standard publications still convince, mainly also in interpretation, and they form an important cornerstone of the discipline, also of this book; Roullet is still valuable in particular as a catalogue.

[442] *Malaise 1972a*, xii.

[443] *Malaise 1972a*, xiii.

A three-way split therefore into religious Aegyptiaca, Aegyptiaca in a more general sense, which were used by the Romans for religious purposes—amongst them egyptianising artefacts—and artefacts which attest merely to the Egyptian fashion. The catalogue is thus in fact a collection of Aegyptiaca which, according to Malaise, have a clear connection with the cults of the Egyptian gods and therefore can illuminate the interpretative part of the research into the distribution and dissemination of the Egyptian cults. It should be noted that after reading the introduction, it becomes clear that we are not at all dealing with an inventory of "documents égyptiens" but with a catalogue of religious Aegyptiaca, and that even in the discussion of these "documents incontestablement isiaques", the context sometimes leads to a reconstruction of a primary function not in relation to the Egyptian gods. More than one third of the over 300 pages of the catalogue is taken up by Aegyptiaca found in Rome: 110 inscriptions, 194 onomastic references, and, especially important for this research, 138 catalogue numbers in the category "documentation archéologique"[444].

The monograph by Roullet is topographically and chronologically limited in respect to Malaise and moreover lacks an interpretative framework. Contrary to Malaise, the author is not aware of the a priori religious framework and the problems which this entails. Definitions, or an attempt to introduce a system in the catalogue in an interpretative respect, are almost absent. Nevertheless, the term 'Egyptian and egyptianising monuments' is interpreted very broadly; the catalogue shows enough examples of monuments and artefacts evidently not directly connected with the Egyptian gods; and frequently exotism or the creation of an exotic atmosphere is cited as reason for the presence of the Aegyptiaca. The confusion is shown in the first sentences of the introduction of the book, in which again 'egyptian' and 'religious' are formally equated, whereas the subsequent catalogue seems to prove the opposite:

> "The importance of the Alexandrian cults in the Roman Empire has been emphasized by many scholars, and a quick glance at any of the catalogues of the Roman museums is enough to confirm the significance of archaeological documents that have survived from various Roman sites dedicated to the Egyptian gods. But no attempt has been made to bring together systematically the Egyptian and egyptianizing monuments of Imperial Rome. (–) The Egyptian antiquities listed here

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[444] Leaving aside the coins, cf. *Malaise 1972a*, 112-237.

> were taken to Europe mainly for religious purposes. Then, copied and plagiarized, they remained famous but soon ceased to be understood."[445]

Roullet seems to suggest that all Aeyptiaca are in fact religious, but that their use can change because the original meaning has become unclear. In the catalogue 265 Roman Aegyptiaca have been collected thematically; the Iseum Campense with 73 objects is the most important context[446].

In particular Malaise's work has been used as a reference in the decade after its publication. A small *EPRO* volume by De Vos, published in 1980, had a notable subject: *L'egittomania in pitture e mosaici Romano-campani della prima età imperiale.* The occurrence of Aegyptiaca was for the first time investigated primarily from a different conceptual background, in which not the Egyptian cults or Isis were the focus, but a cultural process, described as 'egyptomania' by De Vos. In the chronologically limited catalogue however (with about 30 numbers, 6 of them from Rome), mainly are gathered representations and artefacts connected with the cult of the Egyptian gods. Probably also by the absence of a wider conclusion on Aegyptiaca Romana in general, this valuable contribution has not led to a less one-sided view. This is illustrated by important articles from 1982 and 1984 by Coarelli, in which an overview and discussion are given of the cult places of the Egyptian gods in Rome. Compared to Malaise, Coarelli sometimes adds new information and, in contrast with Malaise's restrained interpretations, he puts the religious aspect more to the fore. In 1989 an article appeared by Grenier on the Villa Hadriana, in which he argues in favour of a reconstruction from a religious background of a part of the Egyptian statues found in the so-called Serapeum near the Canopus; a new arrangement of the archaeological material concerned in the Vatican Museums follows this hypothesis.

In the last decade of the 20th century, the archaeological interest in all kinds of aspects of the Egyptian presence in Italy and Rome seems to have increased considerably. A contribution to this will have been made by the publication of two monographs on the two best preserved sanctuaries, the Isis temple in Pompeii and the Iseum Campense, through which an interest was generated again for this in itself already well-known material now that it was easier to study[447]. In 1995 Takács published a monograph with the simple title *Isis and Sarapis in the Roman world*, in which the presence of the Egyptian gods in the Roman world is viewed from a fundamentally different angle in respect to most previous studies. Aegyptiaca Romana play an important role in this book. The author seems to propose a shift in interpretation frosm 'Isissehnsucht' to 'Realpolitik'. The increased interest is probably best illustrated by the large-scale Isis exhibition in Milan of 1997, which was accompanied by a voluminous catalogue. Various articles are devoted to the reconstruction of cult places for the Egyptian gods and Aegyptiaca in Rome; due to the fact that these articles are written by many different authors, no coherent interpretation emerges from the text. In 1998 a contribution by Alfano critically questioned the way of reconstructing cult places for the Egyptian gods in Rome[448]. A team of Italian scholars is at present engaged in making a new inventory of Roman Aegyptiaca connected with the Egyptian cults[449]. In one of the already published results, the selection method used is justified and a warning given for a too religiously tinted interpretation:

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[445] *Roullet 1972*, xv.

[446] Her catalogue raisonné amounts to 333 numbers, 68 of which derive from the villa of Hadrian in Tivoli.

> "Innanzitutto bisogna puntualizzare che dalla presente esposizione sono state escluse tutte quelle testimonianze non strettamente connesse alla sfera sacrale, quali mosaici, intonaci parietali, oggetti d'uso e manufatti ornamentali o riutilizzati in senso decorativo. (–) Una ulteriore precisazione deve essere fatta a proposito del metodo adottato nell'interpretazione delle presenze archeologiche attestanti i culti egizi o presunte tali. Il rigore, forse estremo, cui si è dovuto ricorrere scaturisce dalla necessità di non sopravvalutare il dato archeologico, attribuendogli significati non appropriati. (–) Tale leggerezza ha comportato la ricostruzione di un quadro della religione egizia a Roma spesso forzato e a volte lontano dal vero." [450]

The authors argue in favour of the existence of an Egyptian or egyptianising style which has nothing to do with the Isis cult and moreover seem to connect specific material categories, such as mosaics, paintings and implements, with these Aegyptiaca, which are to be interpreted purely as decoration. These assertions will be tested in the sections below. What can be said already now though is that the overview of Aegyptiaca in the Roman world in general (section 1) contradicts the connection between a specific category of material culture and a specific meaning: both the Apis mosaic, which decorated the entrance to the Serapeum in Ostia, and the paintings from the ekklesiasterion of the Pompeiian Isis temple for instance, should be interpreted in direct connection with the Egyptian religion[451].

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[447] *Alla richerca di Iside* (1992) and *Lembke 1994.*

[448] C. Alfano, Problemi archeologici relativi all'identificazione dei luoghi di culto egizio a Roma, in: *Roma e l'Egitto* I, 41-46.

[449] For the first results cf. *Bongrani et al. 1999.*

[450] *Bongrani et al. 1999*, 84 for the quotation.

Also published in 1999, to conclude, was an article by Söldner on the meaning of Egyptian 'Bildmotive' in Augustan Rome. The author rejects the overall religious interpretation advocated by Schefold as well as the 'egittomania' concept of De Vos and stresses the political allusions of these motifs as references to the battle at Actium and the Augustan *aurea aetas* resulting from that victory[452]. The revival of the 'études isiaques' seems to take shape definitively with the organisation of an international symposium in Poitiers in 1999[453]. The role of Isis and other Egyptian gods is still dominant there, although it does seem that we can observe a tendency to nuance what is characterised in the above as an a priori religious interpretation.

In the sections below (2.2 to 2.8), a topographical overview will be given of the Aegyptiaca preserved in and around Rome. It clearly does not aim to be a catalogue of all Aegyptiaca preserved in the city. The data collected by Malaise and Roullet have been taken as a point of departure and have been complemented with data from more recent publications. The compilation of an overview pretending to be exhaustive would be of great value, but it is outside the scope of this research. Besides, the attention given to various objects or monuments is uneven. The sections would primarily like to have a problematising character and test in particular the a priori religious interpretation. Hence, the following six sections will, apart from an overview, mainly provide a discussion on Roman Aegyptiaca and their interpretation. It differs fundamentally from other syntheses by a wider application of the notion 'Egyptian and egyptianising'; it intends first to show (a representative selection of) the archaeological material and subsequently to formulate, if possible, an overall interpretation. Following the definition in section 1 of this chapter, all monuments and artefacts will be regarded as Aegyptiaca which evoked an association with Egypt and Egyptian (material) culture: the Iseum Campense and a painted egyptianising tapestry border in the Domus Aurea are thus next to each other. In order not to make the overview unnecessarily heavy, it was decided not to mention again the Nilotic scenes found in Rome and originating from Rome; they will of course play a role in the final conclusion. This case study is intended as a blueprint of what a real catalogue of Egyptian and egyptianising monuments and artefacts should look like[454]. The classical division of Rome into 12 regions dates from the Augustan period (7 BC); an overview of the various regions, in which also their names are mentioned, has only been preserved from the time of Constantine. It is not always known where exactly the borders were between the various regions[455].

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[451] For the Serapeum in Ostia cf. cat. no. 002; for the Iseum in Pompeii cf. cat. no. 061.

[452] *Söldner 1999*. For a more popular, somewhat different draft of the essay cf. *AW* 31 (2000) 383-393. I only read these articles while preparing the final manuscript. In this important essay Söldner mainly illustrates Zanker's Augustan propaganda concept (*Zanker 1987*), paying less attention to other possible meanings of Egyptian motifs in Augustan Rome. The author strongly puts forward what we could call the *aurea aetas* interpretation, as already did De Vos in 1986 (cf. cat. no. 017 with note 130, not quoted by Söldner). As one of the first the author talks about: "eine differenzierte Interpretation der ägyptischen Bildmotive im augusteischen Rom" (99).

[453] Cf. *Bricault 2000*.

2.2 *Region II (Caelimontium), III (Isis et Sarapis) and IV*

2.2.1 *The Iseum Metellinum on the Caelius*

literature: *Lafaye 1884*, 200-203; *Malaise 1972a*, 167-171; *Coarelli 1982*; *LTUR* III, 110-112; *Lollio Barberi/Parola/Toti 1995*, 54-56; *Ensoli 1997*, 308-312.

In 1848 a votive inscription to *isis regina* dating to the beginning of the third century AD and dedicated by an officer of the Castra Peregrina, was found near S. Maria in Domnica (*CIL* VI, 354/*RICIS* 50/0101). Lafaye mentions the find of a number of Aegyptiaca near the church and in the gardens of the nearby Villa Mattei: marble statues of Isis and an Egyptian priestess with a hydria in her hands, a relief with two Isis priests and a fragmentarily preserved inscription, the base of a column decorated with lotus flowers and two marble bases with egyptianising offering scenes. A sanctuary forms a possible context for these seven artefacts, which were found in a large area and not in situ. This hypothesis is reinforced by the fact that in an extract of Trebellius Pollio, a writer and biographer who lived at the end of the third/beginning of the fourth century AD, as indication of the location is used: *in monte Caelio, inter duos lucos, contra Isium Metellinum*[456]. All these arguments together make a reconstruction of an Isis sanctuary on the Caelius probable. The addition of *Metellinum*, mentioned by Trebellius Pollio, does not seem to be related to a specific religious manifestation of Isis; today it is generally assumed that it is the name of the founder or rebuilder of the cult place; Coarelli has made a forced attempt to connect a historical figure to it[457]. The fact that the Iseum was known under the name of a personally involved individual, indicates that it would not have been a large public sanctuary. Any further literary or epigraphical information is lacking. Malaise suggested the reconstruction of a simple shrine and that seems for the time being the most probable. Caution should prevail in the automatic assignation of Aegyptiaca of this area to the sanctuary. Under S. Stefano Rotondo, in the grounds of the Castra Peregrina, the remains of a Mithraeum have been found, and in it a bust of Isis from the second century AD. Perhaps the goddess was thus also worshipped in this Mithraeum and the votive inscription of the officer of the camp could, for instance, be assigned to this context, and not to the Iseum Metellinum. The possible religious-historical background of the place where now stands S. Maria in Domnica provides an argument to postulate the existence of the shrine on that spot. This church is also known as 'in navicella', because of a classical, but heavily restored, marble statue of a boat which is erected in front of the church. Such boats would also have been found in the Villa Mattei and are interpreted as ex-voto's, dedicated after a safe return by ship. Isis was, among other things, connected with seafaring. We are therefore perhaps dealing with religious continuity, in which a church for Maria has arisen on the spot of a sanctuary for Isis Pelagia, and where only the statue of a boat still recalls the earlier phase.

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[454] Cf. the commentary formulated above on the selection criteria of Malaise, Roullet and others.

[455] See further *LTUR* IV, 197-204 sv. Regiones Quatuordecim.

De Vos (cf. section 2.2.2), followed by Ensoli, equates the Iseum Metellinum with the Isis and Sarapis sanctuary which would have given region III its name and which should be located on the present piazza Iside/via P. Villari. This does not seem very probable. Not only are the various remains around S. Maria in Domnica at considerable distance from those near SS. Marcellino e Pietro in region III, it also seems improbable that a large Egyptian sanctuary in imperial times would bear the name of a private person.

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[456] Trebellius Pollio, *Historia Augusta, triginta tyranni*, 25.

[457] *Coarelli 1982*, 54-57 (followed by *De Vos 1997*, 102-103) thinks the sanctuary is called after P. Caecilius Metellus Pius, presumably the founder, consul in 80 BC.

For the time being, it seems most probable to reconstruct a modest shrine for Isis on the Caelius, perhaps on the spot of the present S. Maria in Domnica.

2.2.2 *A sanctuary for Isis and Sarapis in region III?*

literature: *Lafaye 1884*, 203-210; *Malaise 1972a*, 171-176; *Roullet 1972*, 35-36; *Coarelli 1982*, *LTUR* III, 110-112; *De Vos 1994*, 151-155; *Lollio Barberi/Parola/Toti 1995*, 70-71; *Ensoli 1997*, 308-312; *De Vos 1997*; *Ensoli 2000*, 268-296.

Based on the fact that region III, at least in the time of Constantine, was called Isis et Sarapis, it is usually assumed that there was a sanctuary for these Egyptian gods in the area. Region III covered approximately the Esquiline; two inscriptions confirm that the area did indeed bear this name (*RICIS* 501/0103-04). In the naming of the Augustan regions, topographical names (Aventinus, Trans Tiberim) or notable characteristics of the area (Circus Maximus, Piscina Publica) are usually used, in which old traditions could continue to play a role. Unfortunately the naming of region III is not obvious. It does indeed seem probable that a temple for the two gods has led to the name of the area, but to which period this is related remains unknown, while it is also conceivable that the presence of many Egyptians or followers of the Egyptian cults in the region has led to such a name[458].

In the past, various archaeological finds have been made which seem to confirm the Egyptian presence suggested by the name of the area[459]. Many Aegyptiaca have been found in particular around SS. Marcellino e Pietro, a Constantinean *titulus* drastically rebuilt in the 18th century, on the intersection of the Via Labicana and the Via Merulana. The various finds have been used by different authors to reconstruct at will one, two or three sanctuaries or shrines. In the remainder of this section, first all the relevant (archaeological) material will be introduced briefly, before, after a discussion of the various reconstructions, an own synthesis is given.

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[458] Cf. *De Vos 1994*, 130-132 who also remarks that the designation *isiaci* does not necessarily refer to adherents of the Egyptian goddess; also people living in region III could be called that way; as in Pompeii where people living in the quarter around the temple of Isis are called *isiaci* in a grafitto, see *De Vos 1997*, 99.

[459] See, most recently and extensively, *De Vos 1997* , esp. 136-137 for some less known examples.

Near SS. Marcellino e Pietro a spectacular find was made in 1653, which is documented by an anonymous report from 1664: people came across the remains of a building with egyptianising paintings which at the time were preserved in an excellent condition[460]. Under the influence of air and damp, the depictions rapidly deteriorated, and the paintings themselves have not been preserved. By order of Cassiano Dal Pozzo, however, a few drawings were made and pieces of the paintings were also removed. Until recently, the anonymous report was the only source for the reconstruction of this complex. However, De Vos has succeeded in rediscovering the drawings mentioned in the library of Windsor Castle. Lafaye had already made an attempt to do this and until De Vos' discovery, his footnote in which the disappointing result of this effort is mentioned has apparently satisfied all scholars who dealt with the subject after him[461]. The anonymous report from a decade after the discovery mentions "idols and winged animals, ibises and sphinxes, standing priests and other priests kneeling in front of crowned and winged monsters, priests with baskets full of grain and flowers". The drawings show painted stucco decorations with Isis, Demeter, Osiris, Harpocrates and Minerva among snakes, birds and kneeling adorants[462].

In 1875 the head of an Isis statue was found near SS. Marcellino e Pietro, and, in another place, a head with nemes and uraeus that probably came from a sphinx[463]. In 1876 two fragments were found of a marble egyptianising relief on which one can see a part of an Egyptian temple and Isis with Apis or Hathor next to some papyrus stems[464]. A number of marble fragments of Isis statues were found in 1877 in the via Labicana, at some hundred metres from SS. Marcellino e Pietro: five life-size heads of the goddess and a small Sarapis head. Most notable is the head of pentelic marble of Isis, or of a queen who wanted to identify herself with the goddess, dating from the second century BC[465].

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[460] *Wild 1984*, 1813 quotes text and translation. Cf. his note 171 for further information on this document.

[461] *Lafaye 1884*, 207 n. 5: "nous avons fait rechercher ces dessins dans les bibliothèques d'Oxford et de Montpellier, où sont deposés des papiers du chevalier dal Pozzo (–), mais sans succes". For Dal Pozzo see now I. Herklotz, *Cassiano dal Pozzo und die Archäologie des 17. Jhs.* (1999).

[462] See *De Vos 1997*, 137-142 for a detailed description. See now also H. Whitehouse, *Ancient mosaics and wallpaintings. The paper museum of Cassiano dal Pozzo* (Series A, part 1) (2001) 249-253 sv. 61-62.

[463] The head of the sphinx, which is dated in the first century AD, has been published by Ensoli in *Iside*, 399 sv. V.17.

In the 1880's excavations were done by Lanciani in the corner which is bounded in the south by the Via Labicana and in the east by the Via Merulana (the present via P. Villari). He uncovered the remains of a huge complex, of which a large platform, monumental steps, a water basin and porticoes were still recognisable. In 1887 remains of the decoration of this complex were found in a later building, amongst them Isis, Sarapis and Harpocrates busts. A few other Aegyptiaca were also found in these years during the excavations and other activities in the neighbourhood, of which the so-called Apis Brancaccio, now in the Palazzo Altemps in Rome, is most notable[466].

Lanciani interpreted the remains found by him as the Egyptian temple of region III. Based on the report of the 17th century discovery and the find of a number of Aegyptiaca, however, a sanctuary for the Egyptian gods was usually reconstructed near SS. Marcellino e Pietro. Following Lafaye, Malaise locates it east of the church, whereas Roullet and Lollio Barberi c.s. comment in more general terms on the location. Curiously enough, De Vos is the first to include the monumental archaeological remains north of the Via Labicana in the discussion again. Also on the grounds of the drawings rediscovered in Windsor, she is in favour of an identification of the complex on the piazza Iside/via P. Villari with the Iseum and Serapeum of region III[467].

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[464] Cf. *Malaise 1972a*, 173-174 sv. Rome 317 and *Iside* 405 sv. V.22 and 23 (illustrations/descriptions switched).

[465] Cf. *Iside*, 396-397 sv. V.15. For the finds in general see Malaise and Roullet; the information of the latter is however incomplete and sometimes wrong. Absent in Roullet are *Malaise 1972a*, sv. 315 a-c and e-f and 316 (Malaise sv. 314 = Roullet sv. 155; Malaise sv. 315d = Roullet sv. 182; Malaise sv. 317 = Roullet sv. 35-36; Malaise sv. 318 = Roullet sv. 267). Furthermore, Roullet attributes erroneously (132 and sv. 275-276) a pair of lions to the supposed sanctuary.

[466] In 1884 and 1886, in three different spots and just 100 metres from each other, fragments were found of a black granite statue of a cow. Initially it was erected in the garden of one of the three findspots, the Palazzo Brancaccio, and it is now part of the collection of the Museo Nazionale Romano. The piece shows many similarities with another, much less well-preserved, statue which decorated the Iseum Campense. There is disagreement on the dating (old Egyptian, Ptolemaic or Roman and made after the statue of the Iseum Campense), as there is on the interpretation (Hathor or Apis). Cf. *Malaise 1972a*, 174 sv. Rome 318; *Roullet 1972*, 129-130 sv. 267 (both with previous literature); S. Curto, Il torello brancaccio, in: *Hommages Vermaseren* I, 282-295; *Lollio Barberi/Parola/Toti 1995*, 180-182 sv. 35; *De Vos 1997*, 125-129 and, for the findspot, C. Häuber, F. Xaver Schütz, in: *Docter/Moormann 1999*, 194-196. For other Aegyptiaca found on the Esquiline which are connected with this context cf. *Malaise 1972a*, 175-176 sv. Rome 319-322.

Two factors make the reconstruction of Egyptian sanctuaries in region III more complex. First, some authors see in the Iseum Metellinum dealt with in the previous section the Egyptian sanctuary of region III on piazza Iside/Via P. Villari. An argument in favour of this hypothesis should be the indication of the place where the *domus Tetricorum* can be located which is used in the *Historia Augusta*: *contra isium Metellinum.* The house of the Tetrici would have been in the valley south of the Via Labicana and *contra* would therefore, when meaning 'opposite', indicate a place on the sloping hills north of the Via Labicana A second complication is a unique mention of *Isis Patricia* in the Cataloghi Regionari, following *Minerva Medica*, to conclude the discussion of the curiosities on the Esquiline. On the Oppius, south of the so-called auditorium of Maecenas, the remains of an aedicula devoted to Minerva were indeed discovered. The written record is for some scholars enough reason to reconstruct a cult place for Isis, which is then sometimes equated with the Egyptian sanctuary of region III. Others think that it concerns a statue of Isis. Aegyptiaca found in the area, hitherto used to show the existence of the sanctuary of region III, are also used to support the existence of this alleged sanctuary of Isis.

The most important syntheses can be summarised as follows:

*Lafaye mentions an Iseum Metellinum on the Caelius. He postulates the existence of the sanctuary of region III at the west side of the SS. Marcellino e Pietro. *Isis Patricia* would be related to a temple for the goddess somewhere near S. Maria Maggiore.

*Malaise reconstructs an Iseum Metellinum on the Caelius, be it or not on the spot of the present S. Maria in Domnica, and an Iseum and Serapeum in region III near SS. Marcellino e Pietro. The mention of *Isis Patricia* would refer to a colossal statue or a building in the *vicus Patricius*.

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[467] De Vos suggests that researchers wrongly understood the information of antiquarians such as Bartoli and Bellori: expressions like "presso la chiesa" or "dietro Santi Pietro e Marcellino" cannot be used as exact indications. SS. Pietro e Marcellino was used as a landmark as it was the only monument in the rural area and not because the remains would be in the immediate vicinity of the church.

*Roullet speaks of a smaller shrine on the Caelius and a large temple ("the second great Iseum of Rome") on the southeast hill of the Oppius. There would have been at least an altar "to the Patrician Isis" on the Esquiline, to which the Aegyptiaca found in the area should be connected.

*Coarelli also reconstructs three sanctuaries: the Iseum Metellinum, a large sanctuary in region III to which the finds around SS. Marcellino e Pietro are connected, and a sanctuary for Isis in the *vicus Patricius*.

*The relevant entries in *LTUR* were written by two different authors, so that in this case no logical synthesis is created, as the same Aegyptiaca are used to prove different hypotheses. De Vos (as in her 1997 publication) identifies the Iseum Metellinum with the Egyptian temple of region III and equates this temple, also based on all the finds in the area, with the remains around piazza Iside. Calzini Gysens reconstructs a sanctuary for Isis Patricia on the Esquiline on the grounds of the written record and the many finds of Aegyptiaca around the largo Brancaccio.

*Lollio Barberi c.s. reconstruct a small temple founded by a member of the *gens Metella* on the Caelius, opposite the Colosseum near the so-called *caput Africae*. Concerning the sanctuary for Isis and Sarapis in region III near SS. Marcellino e Pietro and Isis Patricia, they reproduce a selection of the various views, without speaking out in favour of one of the possibilities, while they do assume that the mention of Isis Patricia is connected with a sanctuary

*Ensoli follows the identifications of De Vos concerning the Iseum Metellinum and the temple in region III and subsequently she has also Isis Patrica related to this context: "Il santuario di Iside Metellina, denominata probabilmente anche Patricia, divenne in età imperiale il più importante luogo di culto della regio III."

The general problem in the reconstruction of cult places for the Egyptian gods is well illustrated by the case of the assumed Egyptian sanctuary in region III. Based on secondary (literary) sources, the existence of a sanctuary is accepted, while the Aegyptiaca found in the surrounding area are used to support this hypothesis. Every scholar thereby makes his or her own combination of the various data and then arrives at the reconstruction of one, two or three sanctuaries. Instead of adding yet another combination, it seems more useful to critically review the various syntheses. This is also made possible by the various studies of Häuber, in which the topography of the *horti Maecenati*, which covered for a long time a large part of the Esquiline, is the object of study[468]. Häuber investigated the current reconstructions of the buildings in the area, which mainly go back to Lanciani, based on Lanciani's own notes and other documents, which resulted in a reliable and detailed map of the area with the various roads, monuments and finds[469]. From this it appears first of all that the various Aegyptiaca, together with a number of different and different kinds of statues, were found in an area of approximately 100 x 100 metres. A more specific insight is her conclusion that on the basis of the description by P.S. Bartoli of the find of 1653, the remains on the present piazza Iside/via P. Villari cannot be identified with it: Bartoli would indicate a place much nearer to the SS. Marcellino e Pietro. "Wo sich der namengebende Tempel der regio III Isis et Sarapis befand, kann vorerst nicht entschieden werden", Häuber concludes. The use of the area as *horti* suggests a logical possible context for rediscovered statues, among them Egyptian and egyptianising ones. *Horti* were decorated with sculpture groups, pavilions, etc. and it is quite conceivable that some of the Aegyptiaca were part of this furnishing.

The exact reconstruction of the contexts of the Aegyptiaca found in region III will therefore remain unclear. There is no deciding evidence for the identification of the remains found by Lanciani as an Egyptian sanctuary: only a porticus and a basin can be reconstructed with certainty and there are no finds or inscriptions which identify the remains as an Egyptian temple. Also the Dal Pozzo drawings, with various, not only Egyptian, gods and non-religious themes, cannot support the identification[470]. The existence of a temple is indeed probable on the grounds of the name of the region but by no means certain: it is remarkable that there are no inscriptions or literary texts mentioning the sanctuary[471]. The indication of the place of the Domus Tetricorum *in monte Caelio, inter duos lucos, contra isium Metellinum* can be used both as proof for the existence of a sanctuary on the spot of S. Maria in Domnica (*contra* meaning 'near/close by') and on the spot of the present piazza Iside/via P. Villari (*contra* meaning 'opposite'). An equation of the two cult places seems improbable.

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[468] Originally: R.C. Häuber, *Horti Romani. Die Gärten des Maecenas und die Horti Lamiani auf dem Esquilin. Geschichte, Topografie und Statuenfunde* (diss. Köln 1986). Cf. Zur Topografie der Horti Maecenatis und der Horti Lamiani auf dem Esquilin in Rom, *KölnJb* 23 (1990) 11-107; *Häuber 1991* and 'Art as a weapon'. Von Scipio Africanus Maior bis Lucullus. Domus, Horti und Heiligtümer auf dem Esquilin, in: *Horti Romani*, 83-112.

[469] Cf. now also *De Vos 1997*, 143-154.

[470] See also the review of *De Vos 1997* by R. Ling, Isis and Hylas in paintings and wall-mosaics in three monuments in Rome, *JRA* 13 (2000) 543-548, esp. 543-545: "the overall verdict on the case presented in this essay must be 'not proven'" (545).

It can be concluded therefore that based on the name of the region there may have been a temple for the Egyptian gods in region III. Some of the Aegyptiaca found in the area can perhaps be connected with this temple; the use of the area as *horti* however is in itself also a possible context for these aegyptiaca. If one is to believe the Cataloghi Regionari, there was also a modest religious context for Isis Patricia in the area.

2.2.3 *A sacellum in the Castra Misenatium?*

literature: *Malaise 1972a*, 176 sv. Rome 323; *Coarelli 1982*, 58; *Iside*, 317.

A second century AD statue of a seated Sarapis found on the Oppius, near the baths of Trajan, led Malaise to suggest that there was a sacellum for this god in the nearby Castra Misenatium, where Egyptian sailors encamped. This is indeed one of the many possible contexts for such a statue; it can, as Ensoli (in *Iside*) suggests, also have been part of the decoration of the thermae. Coarelli thinks that the statue indicates the presence of a sanctuary. There is no evidence for this.

2.2.4 *Egyptian motifs in wall-paintings in the Domus Aurea*

literature: *De Vos 1980*, 68 sv. 26$^{c.}$

In the pavilion of Nero's Domus Aurea complex, preserved in the substructions of the thermae of Trajan, cryptoporticus 92 is decorated with Anubis figures, as part of the borders of a panel decoration.

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[471] *Roullet 1972*, 35-36 mentions sv. n. 1 a number of inscriptions found in regio III which are related to the Egyptian gods. None of these, however, mentions the temple or a votive offering.

2.3 *Region V (Esquiliae)*

2.3.1 *Egyptian motifs in opus sectile in the house of Iunius Bassus*

literature: *Lafaye 1884*, 210-211; G. Becatti, *Edificio con opus sectile fuori Porta Marina* (Scavi di Ostia IV) (1967) 181-215; *De Vos 1980*, 33-35 sv. 19; *LTUR* II, 69-70 sv. Domus, Iunius Bassus.

By order of Iunius Bassus, consul in AD 331, a domus was built in that period on the Esquiline, near S. Maria Maggiore. The remains of the complex, preserved until 1930, are known under the name basilica di Iunius Bassus, but an interpretation as part of a private complex is more probable for various reasons. In the 5th century AD, the hall with apse preceded by an atrium, was transformed into a Christian church. The decoration of the atrium can be reconstructed on the basis of archive material and has been preserved partially. It concerns large panels with figurative scenes in marble incrustation from the first half of the fourth century AD. In one of the panels an episode of the myth of Hylas and the nymphs is the focal point, while decorative borders under and along the sides of the depiction show a large variety of Egyptian figures and attributes. On another panel, showing a triumph, drapery decorated with Egyptian figures are suggested as well. This egyptianising decoration has been used to show the existence of a sanctuary for Isis Patricia, reconstructed on the basis of literary sources. Lafaye already rejected this tentative hypothesis. In sum, we are dealing with Egyptian motifs as part of the decoration of the private context of the domus.

2.3.2 *A lararium near S. Martino ai Monti*

literature: C.L. Visconti, Del lario e del mitreo scoperti nell'Esquilino presso la chiesa di S. Martino ai Monti, *BC* 13 (1885) 29-32; *Malaise 1972a*, 176-177 sv. Rome 324-328; *Coarelli 1982*, 58; F. De Salvia, 'Horo sui coccodrilli' nella Roma Constantiniana, in: *The intellectual heritage of Egypt. Studies presented to L. Kákosy* (1992) 509-517; S. Ensoli Vittozzi, Le sculture del 'larario' di S. Martino ai Monti. Un contesto recuperato, *BC* 95 (1993) 221-243; *Lollio Barberi/Parola/Toti 1995*, 72; *LTUR* III, 115 sv. Isis-Fortuna, lararium; *Iside* 579-580 and sv. VI.47-VI.55; *Aurea Roma*, 518-521 sv. nos. 146-155.

Not far north of the baths of Trajan, according to conclusions on the boundaries of the regions by Rodriguez-Almeida, in region V near S. Martino ai Monti, a small aedicula was found in the 19th century with amongst other sculptures a statue of Isis-Fortuna, a bust and statues of Sarapis and Harpocrates and a so-called magic stele from the Ptolemaic period showing Horus on the crocodiles[472]. Thanks to good drawings and descriptions of the remains, an aedicula for Isis and other Egyptian gods, dating from the time of Constantine, can be reconstructed. It is, however, not an important shrine or public cult place[473]. The aedicula is connected by means of steps with a subterranean Mithras sanctuary. Together they form part of a large, late-classical domus. We are therefore dealing with a private cult context, where amongst other deities the Egyptian gods were worshipped.

2.3.3 *A sanctuary for Isis Patricia?*

literature: *Lafaye 1884*, 210-211; *Malaise 1972a*, 178 sv. Rome 330; *Coarelli 1982*, 58; *LTUR* III, 113-114 sv. Isis Patricia; *Lollio Barberi/Parola/Toti 1995*, 72.

As indicated in section 2.2.2 Isis Patricia is mentioned in the Notitia Regionum and in the Curiosum Urbis; Ensoli (in *LTUR*) thinks that this indication concerns the Egyptian sanctuary of region III. It is generally assumed that the epitheton refers to the place where this cultic context would be: the *vicus Patricius*; however, Coarelli correctly notes that this is not necessarily so. It would concern a temple, aedicula or a large statue of the goddess. Apart from the two entries, there is no information which can be connected with certainty with this context.

2.3.4 *An egyptianising nymphaeum near S. Eusebio*

literature: *Malaise 1972a*, 178-179 sv. Rome 331-332; *Häuber 1991*, 289; *De Vos 1997*, 128-129.

In 1883 Lanciani found near S. Eusebio the remains of a round building with 14 recesses. Two statues placed there were also retrieved: a standing Isis and a seated Sarapis[474]. It probably concerns a nymphaeum, which was, at least partly, decorated with Egyptian statues. In a nearby wall, to be dated in the 6th century AD, the statue of a cow had been used as building material; it concerns a first century AD statue comparable with the so-called Apis Brancaccio (see section 2.2.2). Nearby was the house of Vettius Agorius Praetextatus who, together with his wife, is known to have been initiated in the cult of Isis (*CIL* VI, 1779). It is however not clear if the nymphaeum and the house have anything to do with eachother. There are thus no indications for a cultic interpretation of the complex, though this can of course not be excluded.

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[472] See E. Rodriguez, *RendPontAcc.* 48 (1975) 277-278 and the *LTUR* entry mentioned in note 455. For the iconographical theme showing Horus on crocodiles see most recently F. De Salvia, in: *RivStPomp* X 1999 (2001).

[473] *De Salvia 1992*, 511 thinks that the Ptolemaic stele would depict the doors of the assumed context, a temple of Isis. This assumption is thus improbable.

[474] Both statues are now in the Capitoline Museums, cf. *Iside* 319 for an illustration of the statue of Sarapis.

2.3.5 *The obelisk of the Circus Varianus*

literature: *Iversen 1968*, 161-173; *Roullet 1972*, 82 sv. 86; *LTUR* III, 356 sv. Obeliscus Antinoi.

Probably in the second or third decade of the third century AD, the so-called Antinoüs obelisk was erected on the spina of the Circus Varianus, on the Via Labicana[475]. As symbols of the sun, Egyptian obelisks were logically quite often placed in such a context[476]. The fact that this obelisk was Roman and not at all connected with the sun cult, was apparently no obstacle for re-use in the Circus.

2.3.6 *A statue of Cleopatra?*

literature: P. Moreno, *Scultura Ellenistica* 2 (1994) 746-752; *De Vos 1997*, 120; B. Andreae, *Schönheit des Realismus. Auftraggeber, Schöpfer, Betrachter hellenistischer Plastik* (1998) 245-250 sv. 40.

Recently it was suggested to identify the famous statue of Venus of the Esquiline as the young Cleopatra. In the words of Andreae, it would concern "eine Bildnisstatue der mit Anfang zwanzig noch mädchenhaft wirkenden Kleopatra". Originally the statue would have been made for Caesar; only a copy from the time of Claudius has been preserved. The support of the statue is sculpted as an Egyptian vase with papyrusleaf decoration around which an uraeus snake is coiled. This identification is controversial and is not generally followed. Supporters argue that the statue is far too personal for a goddess; it would not concern an ideal type but a real woman with an erotic aura. Thanks to the Egyptian motifs, Cleopatra then comes to mind. As an objection, one could point to the large difference with other portraits known of Cleopatra and to the lack of any further information concerning such a statue. De Vos does not comment on this interpretation; she does, however, describe the statue as "provvista di attributi isiaci e osiriani" and attributes a religious meaning to it.

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[475] For the Antinoüs obelisk cf. further this chapter 2.6.5.

[476] For the meaning of obelisks in the Circus cf. this chapter 2.7.1.

2.4 *Region VI (Alta Semita)*

2.4.1 *A Serapeum on the Quirinal*

literature: *Lafaye 1884*, 211-215; *Malaise 1972a*, 180-182 sv. Rome 334-336; *Coarelli 1982*, 58-59; R. Santangeli Valenzani, ΝΕΩΣ ΥΠΕΡΜΕΓΕΘΗΣ. Osservazioni sul tempio di piazza del Quirinale, *BC* 94 (1991-1992) 7-16; *Lollio Barberi/Parola/Toti 1995*, 79-89; *LTUR* III, 25-26 sv. Hercules et Dionysos, templum; *LTUR* IV, 302-303 sv. Serapis, aedes, templum; *Iside* 314-315; *Ensoli 2000*, 269-271.

The Notitia Regionum and the Curiosum Urbis mention a temple for Sarapis in region VI. This observation was confirmed by a marble inscription concerning the Serapeum by Caracalla, preserved in the floor of S. Agatha. At the end of the 19th century, extensive antique structures in the Giardino Colonna were identified as this Serapeum. The originally much better preserved remains have been used as a marble quarry from the Middle Ages onwards and what remains today are mainly brick foundations. In the Renaissance, the ruins were interpreted as part of the palace of Nero, later an identification as a temple of Sol became fashionable. Lafaye, Nibby and Hülsen correctly rejected these two hypotheses and thought they could identify the foundations as the remains of the Serapeum founded by Caracalla between AD 211 and 217. This assumption has generally been followed for a century until recently an identification with the temple of Hercules and Liber Pater was suggested. The colossal statues of Nile and 'Tiber', now on the Capitol, are usually ascribed to the alleged Serapeum, as are the two Dioscures on the piazza del Quirinale. Lorenz has argued however that these four statues only date from the time of Constantine and were part of a large nymphaeum[477]. As an earlier dating of the statues, in the second century AD, seems more likely, they could first have been part of the complex in the Giardino Colonna and subsequently been used by Constantine. In the neighbourhood only three Aegyptiaca have been found which can perhaps be connected with the alleged Serapeum: during the construction of the Palazzo del Esposizioni in 1882 the underside of an original Egyptian statue with the name of Ramses II was found as well as a Nilotic mosaic and a base with an Egyptian representation[478].

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[477] Th. Lorenz, Monte Cavallo. Ein Nymphäum auf dem Quirinal, *MededRom* 41 (1979) 43-57.

The existence of a temple for Sarapis on the Quirinal seems beyond doubt. Perhaps the remains in the Giardino Colonna can be identified as such; however, for the time being there is no real hard evidence for this. The Aegyptiaca were found at quite some distance from the Giardino Colonna; too little has been preserved of the architecture of the sanctuary for an identification as a Serapeum on that basis, and a reconstruction of the temple for Hercules and Dionysos in the Giardino Colonna is an acceptable alternative.

2.4.2 *A naophoros in the Castra Praetoria*

literature: *Malaise 1972a*, 182 sv. Rome 337; *Coarelli 1982*, 59; *Lollio Barberi/Parola/Toti 1995*, 90.

The find of a green basalt naophoros from the Ptolemaic period in the Via Volturno, led Malaise to the reconstruction of a small cult place in the nearby camp of the Praetorian guard[479]. Later authors follow Malaise, only Lollio Barberi c.s. mention the exact findspot and remark that the statue could just as well have come from the thermae of Diocletian. There is therefore no evidence for a sacellum in the Castra Praetoria; the statue also could have belonged to the decoration of the thermae. That the find of a naophoros does not necessarily suggest a religious context, is confirmed by a recent discovery in Puteoli, where a grey basalt specimen from the XXVII dynasty was found in a necropolis[480].

2.4.3 *Egyptianising furnishings in the horti Sallustiani*

literature: *Malaise 1972a*, 182-183 sv. Rome 338; *Roullet 1972*, 48; *Coarelli 1982*, 59; *LTUR* III, 77-83 sv. Horti Sallustiani.

The *horti Sallustiani* on the Pincio were founded by the son of the historian Sallust in 40 BC and have been imperial property from the time of Nero onwards. As all *horti*, the gardens were furnished with scattered buildings, pavilions and works of art. The existence is known from literary sources of a palatium with a forum, a tribunal, a bath building, a temple for Venus and a *porticus miliarensis*, where Aurelian would have trained his horses. A number of archaeological remains have also been preserved. Architectural remains are among others the so-called palazzo di Sallustio, a cryptoporticus with remains of wall-paintings, a nymphaeum, three swimming pools and a large wall with recesses. Impressive remains of the furnishing of the *horti* are the sculptures of the falling Niobids, the Ludovisi throne and the dying Gaul. A number of Aegyptiaca were also found in this context: a small Egyptian obelisk and four statues of Ptolemaic kings and queens[481]. It seems therefore likely that there was an Egyptian pavilion or that a part of the gardens was decorated with Aegyptiaca, as Malaise concluded. Coarelli reconstructs, on the grounds of the finds, a sanctuary for Isis but does not exclude a decorative function. There is no indication for the existence of a sanctuary. In view of the character of *horti* in general and the find of four egyptianising statues in the same spot, a reconstruction of an Egyptian pavilion, nymphaeum or suchlike is most likely.

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[478] For these last two cf. also cat. nos. 012 and 013. For the Ramses cf. *Roullet 1972*, 104 sv. 158. *Malaise 1972a*, 184 sv. Rome 339 suggests that an egyptianising relief found in the via Due Macelli can also be connected with the Serapeum.

[479] The statue is now in the Capitoline Museums, cf. *Roullet 1972*, 111 sv. 189.

[480] Cf. *Iside*, 451.

This conclusion fits in with a recent assumption by Moltesen, that a statue of a hippopotamus in rosso antico, originating from Rome and now in the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, would originate from the *horti Sallustiani*. This remarkable statue apparently also belonged to the egyptianising decoration of (part of) the gardens[482].

2.5 *Region VII (Via Lata), VIII (Forum Romanum et Magnum) and IX (Circus Flaminius)*

2.5.1 *A temple for Isis Capitolina?*

literature: *Lafaye 1884*, 216; *Malaise 1972a*, 184-187; *Roullet 1972*, 37; *Coarelli 1982*, 59-63; *Coarelli 1984*, 461-475; *Takács 1995*, 32-56; *Lollio Barberi/Parola/Toti 1995*, 51-53; *LTUR* III, 112-113 sv. Isis Capitolina; *Ensoli 1997*, 312-314.

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[481] The obelisk has been re-erected on the Trinità dei Monti (cf. *Iversen 1968*, 128-141); the statues are in the Capitoline Museums.

[482] M. Moltesen, The sculptures from the horti Sallustiani in the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, in: *Horti Romani*, 175-188, 181-182 (fig. 6). Cf. for the statue also *Kozloff 1984*.

In recent publications the existence of a temple for Isis, founded around 100 BC on the Capitoline hill, is generally accepted. There is, however, remarkably little archaeological information which can possibly be connected with such a sanctuary; on the Capitol only a naophoros was found. Other Aegyptiaca, e.g. from the area near the theatre of Marcellus or the Forum Boarium (see section 2.5.3), have been ascribed to the supposed sanctuary; however this remains speculative. A factual indication for the existence of *Isis Capitolina* is provided by two inscriptions[483]. They, however, do not seem to mention a temple building. This is also the case with texts mentioning the remarkable actions of the Senate against the Egyptian cults and its adherents around the middle of the first century BC[484]. We can therefore safely assume that adherents to the Egyptian cults were not an uncommon sight on the Capitol around that period; with the reconstruction of a large, public sanctuary, however, caution should prevail.

2.5.2 *Egyptian motifs as control-marks on the Republican coins*

literature: *Coarelli 1984*; *Meyboom 1995*, 155-158 (Appendix 14: The use of Egyptian motifs as control marks on Roman republican coins) and V n. 43.

From the mint on the Capitol Egyptian motifs, most notably the lotus and the Isis crown but also, e,g., the sistrum, hippopotamus, crocodile and snake, were dispersed over the city of Rome as control marks on Republican coins. Meyboom pointed out that the number of Egyptian motifs is relatively very small and therefore does not need a specific explanation. Their repeated use only suggests that these were familiar motifs during the first half of the first century BC.

2.5.3 *Aegyptiaca found near the theatre of Marcellus and the Forum Boarium*

literature: K. Parlasca, Ein Isiskultrelief in Rom, *RM* 71 (1964) 195-205; *Malaise 1972a*, 214-215 sv. Rome 392-394 and 222 sv. Rome 407; *Coarelli 1982*, 64; *Lollio Barberi/Parola/Toti 1995*, 78; *Iside*, 400-402 sv. V.19.

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[483] CIL I(2) 1236/VI 2247 and CIL I(2) 968/VI 2248; see *RICIS* 501/0109 (with a new reading of the text) and 501/0110.

[484] I refer here to *Takács 1995* in which the texts are quoted and extensively discussed; see also Ch. I 2.3.

A number of Aegyptiaca came to light at the foot of the Capitol. In 1935 near the theatre of Marcellus a fragment of a marble relief was found, which shows the turned-aside head and upper part of the body of Isis next to the ends of the stems of two grain plants. It seems to concern a depiction of Isis as fertility goddess (*Isis Frugifera*) after a Hellenistic example. La Rocca and Ensoli (in *Iside*) have made a few suggestions for a reconstruction, but too little has been preserved of the representation to be able to prove one of these hypotheses (a charioteering Isis with Triptolomos, Isis alone on a cart harnassed with Sothis, a ploughing Isis), as Ensoli concludes correctly[485]. On the basis of the similarity with the reliefs of the Ara Pacis, a date in the iulian-claudian era is suggested for the relief in recent literature. Various hypotheses have been advanced concerning the context. Parlasca, followed by Malaise, suggests that the plate was part of the backwall of a recess dedicated to the goddess. La Rocca suggests that the relief would have been part of the triumphal arch of Claudius in the via Lata. Ensoli rejects both hypotheses and connects the relief plate with an Isis temple; in particular the supposed sanctuary of Isis on the Capitol in the time of Claudius.

At some distance from the theatre, in the via della Consolazione, a marble Hathor capital from the Roman period was found. A relief of Sarapis and an egyptianising statue are recorded from the same findspot; however not a single trace of these can nowadays be found and they have not been documented. At an even greater distance, ("nella area di Bocca della Verità", next to the Forum Boarium) an Egyptian statue of a civil servant from the 26th dynasty in black basalt was found. This lead Coarelli to postulate, very cautiously and with a question mark, the existence of a small sanctuary on the Forum Boarium. Lollio Barberi c.s. speak without reservations about the "Iseo Foro Boario". Malaise and Ensoli connect the find(s) with the Iseum on the Capitol assumed by them. There is no evidence for the reconstruction of an Iseum near the Forum Boarium, not even for a modest cult place. The small Egyptian statue of 21 cm could have belonged to various other contexts.

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[485] The fragment is in the Capitoline Museum, inv. no. 2448. For an overview of all hypotheses (with references) cf. Ensoli in *Iside*.

2.5.4 *The Iseum Campense on the Campus Martius*

literature: *Lafaye 1884*, 216-226; *Malaise 1972a*, 187-214 sv. Rome 342-391; *Roullet 1972*, 23-35; *Coarelli 1982*, 63-64; *Ensoli 1990*, 59-70; *Lembke 1994*; *Lollio Barberi/Parola/Toti 1995*, 57-69; *LTUR* III sv. Iseum et Serapeum in Campo Marzio/ Isis Campensis; *Versluys 1997*; S. Ensoli, L'Iseo e Serapeo del Campo Marzio con Domiziano, Adriano e i Severi: l'assetto monumentale e il culto legato all'ideologia ed alla politica imperiali, in: *Roma e l'Egitto* III, 407-438; *Ensoli 2000*, 273-282.

There is no doubt about the existence of a large sanctuary for Isis on the Campus Martius, in region IX. The sanctuary is depicted on the Forma Urbis Romae and mentioned in a number of contemporary sources. Juvenal mentions the temple in his ridiculisation of the followers of the Isis cult in the sixth satire and Flavius Josephus records that Titus and Vespasian spent the night in the sanctuary before their triumphal procession for the victory over Judaea. Scarce remains of the architecture of the complex confirm the place of the ancient sanctuary, on the spot of the present S. Maria sopra Minerva/ Via del Pie di Marmo/S. Stefano del Cacco. Much richer are the many finds in and around this area, brought to light from the 15th century onwards: of the decoration of the sanctuary much more has been preserved, varying from a number of obelisks to statues of Egyptian gods and animals.

As mentioned in sections 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 of this chapter, the Iseum Campense, as the most notable Egyptian context in Rome, received much interest from the Renaissance onwards, and from the end of the 19th century we can speak of a large scientific interest. This has resulted in a monograph by Lembke published in 1994 where all information concerning the sanctuary has been collected. A critical catalogue has been compiled of all Aegyptiaca which can be really ascribed to the temple and, on the basis of all these data, an attempt has been made to recover the meaning of the huge egyptianising context on the Campus Martius. Although from various sides there have been suggestions for additions, it is a reliable monograph, so that a few summarising observations can suffice here[486].

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[486] See the article by Ensoli in *Roma e l'Egitto*. The only addition from my side concerning the source material collected by Lembke are two granite columns in Palazzo Massimo alle Colonne, which would originate from the Iseum, cf. *Guida d'Italia. Roma* (1993) 205. For some new finds see C. Alfano, L'Iseo Campense in Roma: relazione preliminare sui nuovi ritrovamenti, in: *Roma e l'Egitto* III, 177-206.

The topography of the complex is reasonably clear in a general sense. The sanctuary was divided into three parts. In the centre of the southern part was a semi-circular exedra, probably a water basin, surrounded by a porticus with statues of the Egyptian gods. The much larger (approximately 140 x 65 m) northern part of the sanctuary consisted of a temple garden, decorated with all kinds of Aegyptiaca, in which there was a naos for Isis and perhaps also one for Sarapis. The entrance to these two parts was formed by an in-between court with in the centre the so-called obelisk of Domitian and on either side two gates which formed the impressive entrance to the sanctuary[487]. It is difficult to refine this reconstruction, as little or nothing has been preserved of the architecture of the complex, whereas the exact findspot of a large part of the decoration of the sanctuary is not known. The southern part, with the famous statues of Nile and Tiber, which were perhaps erected in the basin, seems to have had a Graeco-Roman character. The typical Egyptian aspects should have come to the fore mainly in the northern temple garden. In the monumental entrance, Domitian, the rebuilder of the complex, was presented as divine pharaoh through the inscriptions on the obelisk. It is not known when the complex was built originally; a foundation between 20 and 10 BC seems most likely. According to literary sources, Tiberius had the sanctuary destroyed in AD 19 due to a scandal, and had the cult statue of Isis thrown in the Tiber. After AD 71, Vespasian built one of the entrance gates; in AD 80 the sanctuary was destroyed by fire and rebuilt by Domitian in the years after that. Septimius Severus had large-scale restorations executed before the complex was struck by fire in the fifth century AD and became dilapidated. According to tradition, the last remains were destroyed with 11th century AD invasions.

Compared with other sanctuaries for the Egyptian gods preserved in the Roman world, the Iseum Campense is extraordinarily well documented. Some comparison can be made with the Isis temple in Pompeii, of which the architecture has been well preserved, as well as parts of the architectural decoration and, although to a lesser extent than the Iseum Campense, the other furnishings. The decoration of the Iseum Campense was very diverse: recovered have been obelisks, egyptianising reliefs, statues of various Egyptian gods, portrait heads of pharaohs, naophoroi, statues of baboons, cattle, lions and sphinxes, a crocodile, egyptianising kitchen ware, canopes, etc. In the choice of these objects not a single religious background can be discovered. There does neither seem to be a specific sanctuary or sacred place in Egypt with which the Italian temple would be connected, nor with a preference for a certain manifestation of Isis or a certain religious conviction. The only common characteristics which the objects seem to possess are their origin from the Egyptian delta, as well as their typically exotic appearance or the exotic material from which they were made; basalt rates highest among the favourite materials. The original meaning of the objects from Egypt therefore does not seem of primary importance; they were shipped to Rome also as exotica. The same seems to apply to the egyptianising artefacts manufactured in Rome after Egyptian examples. This does not mean that such artefacts, which after all were placed in a sanctuary, would not have had a function connected with the cults of the Egyptian gods. It does, however, indicate that the associations of the Roman observer would not have been solely religious. These conclusions, very important for the interpretation of the Aegyptiaca Romana, are not emphasised in Lembke's monograph; her final interpretation of the complex does however totally agree with it: for the followers of the cults of the Egyptian gods the complex naturally had a religious function, as had the majority of the arranged Aegyptiaca. For these observers, the statues of the baboons were depictions of the god Thoth. For the Romans without a religious connection with the Egyptian gods, a large part of the decoration would have served mainly as exotica; they could walk around in the northern temple garden and gaze at the remains of the mysterious civilisation at the banks of the Nile. For these observers the baboons were exotic apes. And finally, for Domitian, the complex in general and the entrance in particular served as place where he could present himself as emperor, divine pharaoh and builder. In line with this kind of interpretation Ensoli, in her most recent essay on the sanctuary, pointed at the possible economic function the Iseum might have had in relation to the grain and other products imported from Egypt[488].

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[487] *Lembke 1994* thinks one of these, the so-called Arco di Camilliano, to be depicted on one of the Hateri tomb reliefs, justly so, as I belief (*Versluys 1997*, 166). For a different view see the article by F.S. Kleiner, *RM* 97 (1990) 127-136, whose opinion is followed by *De Vos 1997*, 109. Recently, in 1999, J.C. Grenier suggested that the so-called obelisk of Domitian came not from the Iseum Campense but has to be ascribed to a complex on the Quirinal (cf. *La villa di Massenzio sulla Via Appia. Il circo*, non vidi).

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[488] *Ensoli 2000*, 277. The Ostian Serapeum (see cat. no. 002), with a horreum

2.5.5 *Delta: another egyptianising context on the Campus Martius?*

literature: *Coarelli 1996.*

Immediately south of the Iseum Campense, between the porticus Meleagri and the Divorum, there is a triangular structure drawn on the Forma Urbis Romae with an inscription which should probably be reconstructed as *(de)lta.* Two waterways came together in this spot on the Campus Martius; the compex seems mainly to have formed the monumental barrier of the Aqua Sallustiani. Coarelli thinks, on the basis of the proximity of the Iseum, that the indication *delta* is not connected with the shape of the structure but points to the Egyptian delta in a topographical sense. He reconstructs a large fountain with a basin and porticoes, which could have served as annex of the nearby Egyptian sanctuary. The (holy) water, very important in the cults of the Egyptian gods, was thus nearby; the name of the place referred to the imaginary Nilotic background of the water.

Based on the name of the structure, the proximity of the Iseum Campense and the absence of a convincing alternative interpretation, the reconstruction of a kind of egyptianising nymphaeum can be taken into consideration. The monumental barrier of the Aqua Claudia, on the spot of the present monument for Vittorio Emmanuele, can serve as parallel. Such a structure however should probably not be interpreted primarily as an Egyptian religious monument. Just as with the so-called Serapeum in the Villa Hadriana, it could have been a water garden in Egyptian style, in which religious connotations will certainly have been present, while it certainly was neither a cult place for the Egyptian gods, nor a monument conceived from an Egyptian religious-historical background. No architectural or decorative remains have been found which can support the reconstruction of such a nymphaeum. This may have been caused by the proximity of the Iseum; Aegyptiaca found will have been automatically connected with that context. The reconstruction by Lembke of the southern part of the Iseum Campense with a large water basin, and the suggestion in *Versluys 1997* that there was also in the forecourt a well with holy water, perhaps a symbolic Nilometer, seem to argue against the hypothesis of Coarelli: water was already present in abundance in the sanctuary itself, and hence an annex at some distance seems superfluous[489].

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being part of the complex, can serve as a parallel to strengthen Ensoli' s thoughts in this respect.

[489] *Lembke 1994,* 18-20 and *Versluys 1997,* 160.

2.5.6 *Egyptianising architectural elements at the mausoleum of Augustus*

literature: *De Vos 1980*, 74; H. von Hesberg, S. Panciera, Das Mausoleum des Augustus, *AbhMünchen Phil-Hist. Kl. N.F.H.* 108 (1994) 32 f.; *LTUR* III, 234-237 sv. Mausoleum Augusti; E. Buchner, Ein Kanal für Obelisken, *AW* 27 (1996) 161-168; *Söldner 1999*, 107.

Two obelisks had been erected near the mausoleum of Octavian on the Campus Martius. They are usually reconstructed on either side of the entrance, but as no bases have been preserved in that place, von Hesberg suggests a position on the corners of the monument. It is not certain whether the obelisks were part of the original construction of the mausoleum and therefore transported to Italy by Octavian, as they are neither mentioned in the description of the monument by Strabo nor in the enumeration of obelisks in Rome by Pliny. These Roman obelisks were not decorated and had no pyramidion. In Pharaonic Egypt obelisks were sometimes used to monumentalise a funerary context; perhaps an attempt was made to refer to this tradition. More likely, however, the placing of the two Aegyptiaca near the grave of the victor of Actium should be seen against a more general ideological background; the obelisks point to Octavian's conquest of Egypt and his quality as pharaoh following from this. In the surroundings of the mausoleum the plates with the *Res Gestae* were placed on public view, as were altars, statues and aediculae. A corniche decorated with an Egyptian ateph crown originates from that context or from the monument itself.

2.5.7 *The sundial on the Campus Martius*

literature: *Iversen 1968*, 47-54, 115-127; *Roullet 1972*, 78 sv. 82; E. Buchner, *Die Sonnenuhr des Augustus* (1982); *LTUR* III, 35-37 sv. Horologium Augusti and 359 sv. Obelisci mausolei augusti.

For understandable intrinsic reasons, an obelisk, in Egypt symbol of the sun, occupied a central place in the Augustan horologium on the Campus Martius. The obelisk was dedicated at the same time as the Ara Pacis and both monuments seem to be connected with Octavian's military successes: the Ara Pacis would refer mainly to the victories in the West; the obelisk, and the sundial as a whole, to the victories in the East. Based on literary and archaeological data, Buchner came to a generally accepted reconstruction of the horologium; he assumes that the obelisk with base was exactly 100 feet tall[490]. Domitian had a new lay-out of hour lines made, in which the obelisk remained in its original place. Additionally a bench was now placed around the base of the obelisk. Some time later, perhaps under Hadrian, part of the lay-out of hour lines disappeared under a large basin.

2.5.8 *The pyramid near Piazza del Popolo*

literature: C. Visconti, V. Vespignani, Delle scoperte avvenute per la demolizione delle torri della porta Flaminia, *BC* 5 (1877) 187-190.

Near Piazza del Popolo, under S. Maria dei Miracoli, just outside the Aurelian city wall, the remains were found of a grave in the shape of a pyramid. There were more of these pyramid graves in Rome: the pyramid of Cestius (cf. section 2.7.5) is the most well-known example.

2.6 Region X (Palatium)

2.6.1 *Egyptianising paintings in the Aula Isiaca and the Casa di Augusto*

literature: G.E. Rizzo, *Le pitture dell'Aula Isiaca di Caligola* (1936); *De Vos 1980*, 13-14 sv. 6 and 60; G. Carettoni, *Das Haus des Augustus auf der Palatin* (1983); *LTUR* II (1995) 130-132; I. Iacopi, *La decorazione pittorica dell'aula isiaca* (1997); *Söldner 1999.*

In 1724 on the Palatine, under the domus Flavia (the palace of Domitian), were discovered the remains of a large room, the decoration of which was well preserved. These paintings show a large number of Egyptian and egyptianising elements, amongst them situlae, uraeus snakes, ateph crowns, lotus flowers and Nilotic scenes. This led Rizzo, who was the first to devote a monograph to the paintings, to an interpretation of the room as an 'aula isiaca', which should be dated in the time of Caligula. Some years later Beyen published an article on the development of the so-called Second Style, in which he, on the basis of a convincing stylistic analysis, dated the paintings of the room however in the Augustan era, around 20 BC. In those days this conclusion led to an antithesis: Octavian was after all thought to be ill-disposed towards Egypt and the Egyptian cults and it was therefore thought impossible that there would have been a cult place for Isis during his reign on the imperial Palatine. The antithesis proved to be a paradox, but even a remark by Malaise in 1972 still shows how difficult it was considered for both sides to be reconcilable: "cette nouvelle datation (the dating of the paintings by Beyen in the Augustan era, mjv) est lourde de conséquence car elle prouve que tout ce qui est alexandrin n'est pas nécessairement isiaque"[491]. It seems that an interpretation of the room in connection with the cults of the Egyptian gods can be excluded. The presence of Aegyptiaca should probably be explained from the notable popularity of Egyptian and egyptianising motifs in the decoration of that period. This also applies to the many Egyptian and egyptianising elements to be found in the painted decoration of the complex of Octavian on the Palatine (Casa di Augusto and Casa di Livia). Here, however, the Isis crowns, situlae, uraeus snakes and Nilotic scenes also will have had a political association, as the relief plates from the nearby temple of Apollo (see section 2.6.2).

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[490] Cf. for critical comments on Buchner's theory however M. Schütz, *Gymnasium* 97 (1990) 432-457 and S. Berti, *Orologi pubblici nel mondo antico* (1991) 83-87.

2.6.2 *Egyptianising relief plates decorating the temple of Apollo*

literature: G. Carettoni, Die 'Campana'-Terrakotten vom Apollo-Palatinus-Tempel, in: *Kaiser Augustus und die verlorene Republik*, 267-272 sv. 126; M.J. Strazzulla, *Il principato di Apollo. Mito e propaganda nelle lastre 'Campana' dal tempio di Apollo Palatino* (1990) 81 ff; *Söldner 1999*, 102-103.

Isis waving a sistrum among two sphinxes is depicted on a number of terracotta relief plates from the early Augustan era (36-28 BC)[492]. The architectural decoration originates from the temple of Apollo on the Palatine. In view of this context, a cultic interpretation in the sense that a depiction of the Egyptian goddess implies the existence of a cult place for Isis can be excluded. Apollo was Octavian's tutelary deity and in that guise responsible for the victory of the battle at Actium. The defeated opponent was Isis, goddess of Cleopatra, who presented herself as *nea Isis.* Virgil, in the *Aeneid*, even includes a reference to the battle at Actium which he describes as a battle between the Roman and Egyptian gods[493]. A depiction of Isis from the temple of Apollo should be interpreted against this background and would have referred to the Roman victory in the battle at Actium.

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[491] *Malaise 1972a*, 218. Cf. also Ch. I 2.

[492] Exhibited in the antiquarium on the Palatine, see M. A. Tomei, *Museo Palatino* (1997).

[493] *Aeneid* VIII, 696-700 e.v. Cf. Ch. V 3.1.2.

2.6.3 *An isiac shrine in the Domus Tiberiana*

literature: C. Pavolini, M. A. Tomei, Iside et Serapide nel palazzo. Lucerne isiache dalla Domus Tiberiana, in: *Rome papers: the baths of Trajan Decius, Iside et Serapide nel Palazzo, a late domus on the Palatine, and Nero's golden house* (1994) 89-130.

During excavations in the 1980's under the domus Tiberiana a number of lamps with depictions of Isis and Sarapis were found. Such objects had already been discovered in the same spot in the 19th century. The recent excavations in 'vano 106' and 'ambiente 96 and 98' revealed in total 22 lamps and a number of separate fragments, dating from the time of Caracalla. Some lamps do not show any burning traces at all and were therefore perhaps used as ex-voto; from literary sources it is known that lamps played a role in the cult of Isis. The excavators therefore reconstruct a cult place for the Egyptian gods in the imperial palace at the end of the second, beginning of the third century AD, and remark that this would certainly have been used by the many oriental slaves and freedmen at the court under Caracalla. The reconstructed shrine was thus in the slave quarters of the palace. This reconstruction is confirmed by graffiti connected with the Egyptian gods found in the Domus Tiberiana[494]. The reconstruction of a small shrine in the servants' quarters seems therefore expedient; there are no indications that we are dealing here with a "centro di culto", which was part of a procession route devoted to the Magna Mater, as Pavolini and Tomei suggest. The votive inscription for Sarapis, from the beginning of the third century AD (cf. section 2.6.4), found in the Domus Flavia, could also be connected with this shrine.

2.6.4 *An isiac shrine in the Domus Flavia*

literature: A. Bartoli, G. Botti, I culti orientali sul Palatino, *RendPontAccad* 39 (1956-57) 18, 35-38; *Malaise 1972a*, 215-222 sv. Rome 395-405; *Roullet 1972*, 47-48; J.B. Ward-Perkins, *Roman Imperial Architecture* (1981) 80-82; C. Pavolini, M. Antonietta Tomei, Iside et Serapide nel palazzo. Lucerne isiache dalla Domus Tiberiana, in: *Rome papers: the baths of Trajan Decius, Iside et Serapide nel Palazzo, a late domus on the Palatine, and Nero's golden house* (1994) 89-130; *Tákacs 1995*, 102-103.

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[494] Cf. P. Castrén, H. Lilius, Graffiti del Palatino. Domus Tiberiana, *ActaInstRomFin* 4 (1970) 36 ff.

A number of Egyptian and egyptianising objects have been found in the domus Flavia. Marble relief fragments with depictions of Egyptian gods and hieroglyphs, a Roman copy after Egyptian originals, decorated walls in the peristylium. Pieces of similar relief plates derive from the eastern slope of the Palatine and therefore perhaps also belonged to the decoration of the palace of Domitian. There were also found a Hathor capital, (heads of) statuettes of Egyptian gods and female egyptianising figures, among them probably an ex-voto, and a terracotta plate with an Ammon head. Malaise reconstructs a shrine for the Egyptian gods and advances as additional evidence a votive inscription for Sarapis from an imperial freedman from the beginning of the third century AD, which also stems from the domus Flavia (cf. section 2.6.3). Roullet speaks of an egyptianising building and suggests that this is the Hermaeum known from literary sources, a place dedicated to Hermes-Thoth, in which Claudius hid after the murder of Caligula. Tákacs disputes the reconstruction of a sanctuary for Isis by pointing to the possible decorative character of the Aegyptiaca and to the possible equation of the Egyptian gods with the Roman ones; it could therefore in her view also concern a cult place for Roman gods with appropriate Egyptian religious aspects. Although it is indeed difficult to underpin the reconstruction of a cult place, the presence of a shrine, partly or totally dedicated to the Egyptian gods does not seem unlikely on the basis of the votive inscription and the presence of an ex-voto. The Aegyptiaca found could have been part of this. The presence of the Egyptian gods in the palace of Domitian need not be surprising; Isis was a full member of the Roman pantheon in that period whilst the Flavii also had a special (political) bond with the Egyptian gods[495].

At the end of the 19th century a fragment of an Egyptian statue of Ramses II was found to the west of the stadium Domitiani. It is not known to which context (domus Augustana or domus Flavia) the object belongs.

2.6.5 *The tomb of Antinoüs?*

literature: J.C. Grenier, F. Coarelli, Le tombe d'Antinoüs à Rome, *MEFRA* 98 (1986) 217-253; H. Meyer (ed.) *Der Obelisk des Antinoos. Eine kommentierte Edition* (1994); *LTUR* IV, 274-275 sv. Sepulcrum, Antinous.

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[495] See Ch. I 2.3.

According to Grenier and Coarelli, the cenotaph of Antinoüs would have been for a certain period on the spot of the later vigna Barberini. This reconstruction is based on their translation of a controversial hieroglyph text on the so-called Barberini or Antinoüs obelisk nowadays standing on the Pincio. According to Grenier, the obelisk would have been part of the grave complex of Antinoüs in the 'garden owned by the prince in Rome' and stood on the burial mound. Coarelli locates the tomb on the imperial Palatine and, more specifically, in the so-called garden of Adonis, known from the Forma Urbis Romae. These Adonea, which therefore also would have comprised for a period the grave complex of Antinoüs, were later perhaps tranformed into the *templum Heliogabali* known from ancient texts. This hypothesis has been more criticised than followed[496]. Meyer c.s. published the best-founded refutation in which all theories on the location of the grave of Antinoüs are critically discussed and the conclusion is drawn that this grave was most likely in Antinoöpolis (Egypt) and the obelisk mentioned apparently came from Egypt to Rome. According to these authors also an analysis of the text on the obelisk does not give an indication for a possible placing in Rome or, as has been assumed, in the Villa Hadriana: the obelisk would have been part of the temple of Osiris-Antinoüs in Antinoöpolis. We do not know therefore how the Antinoüs obelisk was re-used in Rome.

2.7 *Region XI (Circus Maximus), XII (Piscina Publica) and XIII (Aventinus)*

2.7.1 *Obelisks in the Circus Maximus*

literature: *Iversen 1968*, 55-64 and 65-75; *LTUR* III, 355-356 sv. Obeliscus Augusti: Circus Maximus and 356-357 sv. Obeliscus Constantii: Circus Maximus.

In 10 BC, twenty years after the Roman conquest of Egypt, an almost 24 meter tall obelisk from Heliopolis was erected in the eastern part of the Circus Maximus. With a Roman inscription, Octavian dedicates the obelisk to the sun, with the meaningful addition *aegypto in potestatem populi romani redacta* ('after Egypt had been brought in the power of the Roman people', cf. *CIL* VI, 702). This symbol of the sun was very much in its place in the Circus, which in a symbolic sense was perceived by the Romans as a microcosmos, in which the charioteers, like planets, turned seven times round the spina. The original religious meaning is thus re-used, though in a totally different manner. Furthermore the monument underlined the Egyptian subordination to the Roman conquerer, as did the obelisk of the horlogium which, as pendant, was erected in the same year with a similar Roman inscription (see section 2.5.7).

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[496] Cf. H. Lavagne, *Operosa antra. Recherches sur la grotte à Rome de Sylla à Hadrien* (1988) 606-611 and the quoted book by Meyer.

The largest obelisk shipped to Rome (32 m) was erected in the Circus as well. The specimen was originally ordered by Tuthmosis II for the so-called oriental sanctuary of the Ammon temple in Karnak, where the sun cult was, on the contrary, not the focal point. The fact that this obelisk was re-used in the Circus by the Romans, indicates that in the choice of this Egyptian monument the specific original (religious) background apparently did not matter. After wanderings, the monument was in the end shipped to Rome by Constantine II; the arrival and re-erection is narrated by Ammianus Marcellinus (17.4, 14-15). In the second half of the fourth century AD there were thus two obelisks in the Circus.

2.7.2 *Egyptianising contexts in region XII*

literature: *Lafaye 1884*, 226-228 and 331; *Malaise 1972a*, 222-224 sv. Rome 408-409; *Coarelli 1982*, 64-65; *Lollio Barberi/Parola/Toti 1995*, 74-76; *LTUR* III, 112 sv. Isis Athenodoria and 114-115 sv. Isis-Demeter, lararium (domus sotto le thermae Antoninianae); *Ensoli 2000*, 272-273.

In the area round the thermae of Caracalla, various (possible) Aegyptiaca have been found, while literary sources mention an Isis sanctuary in the region. These indications have been used by various authors in different ways: the reconstructions range from a painted lararium in the vigna Guidi and two hypothetical cult places (Coarelli) to "un santuario vero e proprio" with a five meter tall cult statue of Isis (Ensoli). The data are as following:
* The Notitia Regionum and the Curiosum Urbis mention *Isis Athenodoria* in region XII.
* Near the Via Appia, under the thermae of Caracalla, a colossal marble foot clad in a sandal with marine motifs has been found.
* A 16th century manuscript mentions a "Templum Isidis" between the thermae of Caracalla and the via Appia.
* An inscription on a marble cippus from the 1st or 2nd century AD (*CIL*, VI, 8707/*RICIS* 501/0132) mentions an aedes for *Isis Pelagia*.

* In 1867 in the vigna Guidi, near the thermae of Caracalla, the remains were found of a lararium, the paintings of which have been partly preserved: depicted were Harpocrates, Anubis, Isis-Demeter and Sarapis. The lararium is part of a 2nd century AD domus.

It is notable in this overview of the available sources that contemporary material evidence for the reconstruction of an Egyptian sanctuary in region XII is totally absent. The literary sources are late-antique or even date to the 16th century; the reconstruction of a colossal statue of Isis on the basis of the find of a foot with marine motifs is purely speculative, as Lafaye already remarked, and the cult place for Isis Pelagia known through the inscription can have been anywhere in Rome or have been part of, or connected with, already known sanctuaries.

A first difficulty is created by the meaning of the epitheton *Athenodoria*. This could refer to the founder of the cult place (cf. the Iseum Metellinum named after the Metelli), but Coarelli rejects that possibility because the only ones who qualify for such a name giving are senatorial aristocrats, and a family with this name is not known. Visconti had already in the 19th century proposed that it would concern a statue of Isis made by the famous Rhodian sculptor Athenodoros, one of the three makers of the Laocoön group. The colossal foot and the literary entries are thus connected. If the foot has to be, speculatively, ascribed to an Isis statue, it is however usually assumed, on the basis of the marine motifs, that it concerns Isis Pelagia. The fact that the foot has been found among architectural fragments would, together with the inscription mentioning an *aedito ad Isem Pelagiam*, be evidence for a sanctuary for Isis Pelagia in region XII. Is this sanctuary the temple near the via Appia mentioned in the 16th century manuscript or does that indication refer to Isis Athenodoria, whatever that may be? The source material available does not make it possible to clarify the matter further and caution in the reconstruction is therefore needed.

A domus with a lararium dedicated to the Egyptian gods can be reconstructed with certainty in region XII, thanks to the find in the vigna Guidi. Relying on some non-contemporary literary sources, there was consequently also a larger context where Isis was present. If this was a monumental statue of the goddess made (originally) by Athenodoros, then, apart from religious connotations, this place would certainly also have had a kind of cultural or even touristic meaning. However there are too few indications for a reconstruction, with enough certainty underpinned, of Isis Athenodoria: both the colossal foot and the inscription on the cippus cannot be connected to it with certainty. The reconstruction of a temple, temples or a large sanctuary thus remains speculative. This thought is reinforced by the fact that the thermae of Caracalla themselves also knew decorative Egyptian architectural elements: granite columns, partly preserved in S. Maria in Trastevere, showed, amongst other things, Egyptian gods between the sculpted volutes on the capitals[497].

2.7.3 *An Iseum near S. Sabina?*

literature: F. Darsy, *Recherches archéologiques à Sainte-Sabine sur l'Aventin. Géologie—Topographie—Sanctuaires archaïques—Culte isiaque—Ensemble architectural paléochrétien* (1968) 30-55; *Malaise 1972a*, 225-227 sv. Rome 410-411; *Coarelli 1982*, 65; *Wild 1984*, 1814-1817, 1845-1846; R. Volpe, I grafitti isiaci nell'area di S. Sabina a Rome, in: U. Bianchi, M.J. Vermaseren (eds.), *La Soteriologia dei culti orientali nell'Impero Romano* (1982) 145-155; H. Solin, Sui graffiti del santuario isiaco sotto S. Sabina, in: *ibid.*, 132-138; *Lollio Barberi/Parola/Toti 1995*, 76; *LTUR* III (1996) 114 sv. Isis (S. Sabina).

During excavations in the years 1855-1857 and 1936-1937 northwest of S. Sabina, remains were found of structures against the Servian wall, on the slope of the Aventine, near the Tiber. Within the wall, remains were unearthed of houses from the Republican period, outside the wall of houses from Imperial times. In the third century AD these latter structures were converted into a bath house, whereby four rooms kept their original decoration. One of these rooms was in the second century AD part of the house of a certain Cosmus, a freedman of Marcus Aurelius, and it was decorated with paintings which, amongst other things, would show Egyptian cultic scenes. A number of graffiti mentioning the Egyptian gods was also found. For Darsy, supervisor of the excavation in 1936 and 1937, and as appears from the foreword of his publication a great admirer of Cumont, this was enough reason to speak of "le sanctuaire isiaque de l'Aventin". This conclusion has generally been followed (Coarelli: "un gruppo di ambienti fu occupato, nel corso del I. sec. d.C., da una comunità isiaca"), sometimes with some caution (Malaise: "probablement un conventicule de confrérie plutôt qu'un véritable Iséum").

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[497] For a long time it has been assumed erroneously that these columns originated from the Iseum Campense. Cf. D. Kinney, Spolia from the baths of Caracalla in Sta. Maria in Trastevere, *The Art Bulletin* 68(3) (1986) 379-397 and *Versluys 1997*, 168 with n. 28.

The majority of the paintings and graffiti were found in room IV, a kind of long passage. They show an offering scene with, perhaps, Isis-Tyche, a bird next to flowers and a bird next to a vase. From another room come fragments of a water scene. Darsy's interpretations of these paintings are speculative: the flowers would refer to the initiation rites of Isis, the vase would be intended for the holy Nile water, and in the water scene Darsy sees the depiction of the *Navigium Isidis* ceremony. As to the often badly legible and fragmentarily preserved graffiti Darsy thought that an important role was reserved for the Egyptian gods. A critical re-examination of the material by Volpe and Solin however clearly shows that the inscriptions have far less to do with the cult of Isis than Darsy reconstructed.

Therefore, there seems to be no evidence for the reconstruction of an Iseum. Even if one wants to interpret the paintings and part of the graffiti as cultic, it concerns a modest room in an otherwise not demonstrably cultic context. No archaeological material has been found that can underpin an Egyptian cultic interpretation of the room, except from, if so desired, a lamp with small Egyptian heads. Part of the graffiti mention other gods and a statue of Jupiter was found in one of the other rooms as well. Perhaps Isis was worshipped, among other gods, in the private context of the house of Cosmus in the second century AD. There are no indications to postulate the existence of a cult place, let alone a sanctuary.

2.7.4 *Aegyptiaca found in sanctuaries for Jupiter Dolichenus and Mithras*

literature: A.M. Colini, La scoperta del santuario delle divinità dolichene sull'Aventino, *BC* 63 (1935) 152-153; M.J. Vermaseren, C.C. van Essen, *The excavations in the mithraeum of the church of Santa Prisca in Rome* (1965) index sv.; *Malaise 1972a*, 228-229 sv. Rome 412-419; *LTUR* III, 133-134 and 268-269.

What can be reconstructed with certainty on the Aventine, are a cult place for Jupiter Dolichenus and a Mithraeum. A number of Aegyptiaca have been found in both contexts.

Near the sanctuary for Jupiter Dolichenus, east of S. Sabina, it concerns reliefs on which Isis and Sarapis are depicted, as well as an antefix with two uraeus snakes and, relatively notable, two small marble statuettes in Egyptian style, representing persons holding a platter with offerings.

In the case of the Mithraeum near S. Prisca, it concerns depictions of Isis and Sarapis in statuette, bust or relief.

Near S. Prisca in 1709 a fragment of an Egyptian frieze of black basalt was found from the XXXth dynasty with depictions in relief. It is not clear whether this was part of the Mithraeum.

2.7.5 *The pyramid of Cestius*

literature: *Ridley 1992*; H. von Hesberg, *Römische Grabbauten* (1992) 113-121; *LTUR* IV, 278-279; *Feraudi-Gruénais 2001*, 135-137 sv. K 69.

The pyramid of Cestius, next to the Porta Ostiensis, is the remarkable grave of the praetor C. Cestius, who probably died in the years before 12 BC. The monument was incorporated into the city walls built under Aurelian and has remained visible until today. An inscription on one of the sides mentions the deceased and his functions. Little has been preserved of the painting of the burial chamber proper, an early example of the Third Style; the decoration of the walls and vault can however to a large extent be reconstructed with the aid of some 17th century engravings. The pyramid itself is slender and has a square base; on the four corners were columns in front of which statues were placed.

It has often been attempted to explain the choice for the typical Egyptian shape of the tomb from the person buried in it and his specific relation with Egypt: C. Cestius would have taken part in the conquest of Egypt or know the pyramids otherwise from own experience[498]. However, the decoration of the burial chamber does not show a single Egyptian element or feature, which would have been only logical if a personal relation of the deceased with Egypt played a part in the conception of the tomb; the more because egyptianising motives are relatively popular in this period. It should also be noted that there were more of such pyramid tombs in Rome (see sections 2.5.8 and 2.8.3).

A specific relation of C. Cestius with Egypt cannot be proven. The choice for the remarkable shape of his grave should therefore probably be explained more generally. The construction of tombs, partly or entirely in the shape of a pyramid or cylinder was not unusual in the Hellenistic and Roman world, but it was reserved for the very rich. Towards the end of the Republican period, the competition between various senatorial families to show-off the power and wealth of the family through the construction of impressive villae and graves reached an apex. The construction of a tomb in the shape of a pyramid, as a kind of *nec plus ultra*, should probably primarily be seen against this background: C. Cestius wanted to impress with the expensive and notable grave[499]. The prevalent preference for Egyptian and egyptianising forms has perhaps played a role in the choice of the pyramid specifically.

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[498] Cf., for instance, *Ridley 1992*, 12: "The man who planned this tomb for himself had been to Egypt and seen the pyramids".

2.8 *Region XIV (Trans Tiberim) and other Aegyptiaca*

2.8.1 *A relief with Egyptian gods from the Via della Conciliazione*

literature: C. Pietrangeli, Rilievo votivo con divinità alessandrine da via della Conciliazione, *Capitolinum* 14 (1942) 130-138; *Malaise 1972a*, 229-230 sv. Rome 420; *Coarelli 1982*, 65; *Lollio Barberi/Parola/Toti 1995*, 78; *Iside* 403 sv. V.20; *Aurea Roma*, 516-517 sv. 144.

In 1941 in the Via della Conciliazione a large relief (79 x 126 x 30) was found with a depiction of Egyptian gods. In the centre a Sarapis of the so-called Bryaxis type is depicted with next to him Harpocrates. Next to them are two goddesses, who probably should be interpreted as Isis-Demeter (to the right of Sarapis) and Isis-Persephone (on the left). Next to Isis-Demeter the body of a dedicant or priest is depicted, whereas both sides are decorated with snakes. As we are dealing with Egyptian gods in their syncretistic form, usually an Alexandrian background or even origin of the relief is assumed. On stylistic grounds, a date in the second century AD seems most likely. Nothing is known about the context of the relief. Malaise reconstructs a temple or sacellum in region XIV and is followed by Coarelli and Lollio Barberi c.s. ("sacello di Via della Conciliazione"). Ensoli (in *Iside*) however indicates that in view of the origin of the relief from the Ager Vaticanus, the reconstruction of a funerary context is not unlikely, whereby some egyptianising paintings from the necropolis are supplied as parallel. In that case the relief would have been part of the grave monument of an Isis priest or an adherent to the Egyptian cults. It can be concluded that there are different possibilities for the reconstruction of the original context of the relief. To assume the presence of a cult place, let alone a temple, is speculative.

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[499] *Zanker 1987* has suggested that, as the pyramid should be dated in the Augustan period when such a display of wealth is no longer acceptable, C. Cestius is in fact a less important person, who badly sensed the changing political and aesthetic climate of his time.

2.8.2 *Egyptianising paintings in the necropolis under S. Pietro*

literature: *Malaise 1972a*, 230 sv. 421; *De Vos 1980*, 26 sv. 15; H. Mielsch, H. von Hesberg, *Die heidnische Nekropole unter St. Peter in Rom*, II. *Die Mausoleen E-I und Z-Psi* (1995) 227-231; *Feraudi-Gruénais 2001*, 58-62 sv. K23/24.

The paintings supplied by Ensoli as a parallel for the relief discussed above, originate from the necropolis under S. Pietro. It concerns tombs from the end of the second century AD, the painted decoration of which shows egyptianising figures, amongst them Horus.

2.8.3 *'In loco detto Egitto'*

literature: B. Peebles, La Meta Romuli, *RendPontAcc* 12 (1936) 21-63; *Iversen 1968*, 19-46; *Malaise 1972a*, 231 sv. 422; *Roullet 1972*, 85 sv. 95.

In the 16th century a remarkable toponym was used to indicate the area around S. Pietro: 'in luogo d'Egipto' or 'in loco detto Egitto'. Malaise thinks that this refers to the Isis sanctuary he reconstructed in region XIV (cf. section 2.8.1). The two tombs discussed above would have belonged to adherents of this sanctuary while also the capitals decorated with Egyptian gods between the volutes and re-used in S. Maria in Trastevere, in reality originating from the thermae of Caracalla (cf. section 2.7.3), would originate from this Iseum in region XIV. As there is no evidence for the existence of this sanctuary, the toponym is likely to have a different background. Notable monuments, which could have given the area its name, are easy to find. Until the 16th century one of the tombs of the necropolis had the shape of a pyramid. This one was even larger than the pyramid of Cestius, which was indicated as 'meta Remi', and was known as its pendant: the tomb of Romulus. Around 1500 the grave was partially demolished for the construction of Via della Conciliazione, the road that was to connect Castel S. Angelo with the Vatican. Until the second half of the 16th century remains of the pyramid remained visible; during archaeological investigations in 1948 the foundations were located[500]. There was also since times immemorial, in reality from the beginning of the first century AD, an impressive obelisk visible in this area: the so-called Vaticanus (cf. section 2.1.1). The obelisk, originally erected by Caligula in the Circus Gai et Neronis, had always been visible in the neighbourhood of S. Pietro; until 1586 at the spot of the ancient Circus. The monument is also known as 'pyramidis beati Petri'. It is quite conceivable that these two notable Egyptian monuments were the cause of the toponym.

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[500] *Ridley 1992*, 13-14 thinks, on the basis of a triptych by Giotto, in which both the pyramid of Cestius and the 'Meta Romuli' would be depicted faithfully, that it concerned in fact not a pyramid here but a hexagonal round building. However, all other information known about this monument contradicts this.

2.8.4 *A Ptolemaic vase from vigna Bonelli*

literature: *Lafaye 1884*, 334 sv. 233; *Malaise 1972a*, 231-232 sv. 425; *Roullet 1972a*, 145 sv. 326.

In vigna Bonelli, near porta Portese, a black basalt vase from the Ptolemaic period and decorated in relief, was found in the remains of a building from the second century AD. Malaise mentions that in the neighbourhood some votive inscriptions for oriental gods were uncovered and suggests the existence of an oriental cult place, where the Egyptian gods would have had their place; Roullet names the context as Fortuna temple. As there is no further information about the context of the object, all hypotheses remain speculative.

2.8.5 *An 'oriental' sanctuary on the Gianicolo*

literature: P. Gauckler, *Le sanctuaire syrien du Janicule* (1912); *Malaise 1972a*, 231 sv. Rome 424; *Roullet 1972*, 41 and 103 sv. 156; M.E. Mele, C. Mocchegiani Carpano (eds.), *L'area del 'santuario siriaco del Gianicolo'. Problemi archeologici e storico-religiosi* (1982); J. Calzini Gysens, Il lucus Furrinae e il culti del cosidetto 'santuario isiaco', in: E.M. Steinby (ed.), *Ianiculum-Gianicolo. Storia, topografia, monumenti, leggende dall'antichità al rinascimento* (1996) 53-60; *LTUR* III, 139-143.

At the beginning of the 20th century, on the east side of the Gianicolo remains were discovered of a late-antique complex, which was published as a Syrian sanctuary on the basis of the architecture and the finds. The cult place was already in use in the second century AD and was thoroughly rebuilt in the fourth century AD. Most notable is the find of a bronze statue that is variously interpreted, from Hadad or Kronos to Osiris/Aion or Adonis/Aion. It seems safe to reconstruct a sanctuary with different rooms, in which mainly oriental gods were worshipped, but where Dionysos was also notably present. The absence of a clear indication for the interpretation and characteristics of the sanctuary has resulted in a large number of publications on the cult place, from which it becomes clear that Gauckler's interpretation of the complex as Syrian sanctuary is rather inadequate. Apart from a hypothetical Osiris statue, also a basalt statue of a standing pharaoh from the Ptolemaic period has been found. In addition, an excavation report mentions egyptianising figures in the (now lost) painted decoration. On the basis of these data, a sanctuary with a partly Egyptian character can be postulated on the Gianicolo.

2.8.6 *An obelisk on Tiber island*

literature: *Iversen 1968*, 179-180; *LTUR* III, 99-101 sv. Insula Tiberina.

In the centre of Tiber island, opposite the Asklepios temple built in the third century AD, there is usually reconstructed an obelisk. This reconstruction is based on the fact that a Roman obelisk of modest size was standing on present piazza S. Bartolomeo until the 16th century. Only a few fragments of it have been preserved, in the Museo Nazionale in Naples. A reconstruction of an obelisk on the Tiber island can be assumed with some caution; the exact place and context are not known.

Sometime in Antiquity, the Tiber island acquired the shape of a ship. Hence in the Renaissance a myth was created that the obelisk would have been erected as the mast of this ship; a topos which is represented in many depictions, with the result that the obelisk is always depicted far too large. The most remarkable example of this conviction is probably the model of the city of Rome made by Pierro Ligorio for the gardens of the villa d'Este in Tivoli, in which the mast/obelisk of the ship/Tiber island is also used as a fountain.

2.8.7 *Aegyptiaca found in the Tiber*

literature: F.W. von Bissing, Sul tipo dei sistri trovati nel Tevere, *BSAA* 31 (1937) 211-224; *Malaise 1972a*, 232 sv. 427-428; *Roullet 1972*, sv. 117, 159, 210 and 318; *Mora 1990*, II 92.

For many centuries all kinds of Roman antiquities have re-emerged from the Tiber, among them also Aegyptiaca. It concerns a group of seven sistra, statues of Isis and an Egyptian priest, busts of Isis and a pharaoh, and a piece of a stele; a selection of the Aegyptiaca at hand in Rome. On the basis of a mention known from ancient texts about the closure of the temple of Isis by Tiberius due to a scandal and the subsequent throwing into the Tiber of the cult statue of the goddess, it has been assumed, most recently by Mora, that the presence of the sistra can be thus explained. Such an assumption is however entirely speculative.

2.8.8 *Aegyptiaca extra muros*

literature: *Iversen 1968*, 76-92 (obelisk Circus of Maxentius); *Malaise 1972a*, 233 sv. Rome 429-433; *Lollio Barberi/Parola/Toti 1995*, 230-232 (villa of the Quintilii); *La villa di Massenzio sulla Via Appia. Il circo (1999).*

At the beginning of the fourth century AD, Maxentius had a sanctuary built for his deceased son as well as a circus near his suburban villa on the Via Appia antica. The latter monument was embellished with the so-called obelisk of Domitian, which decorated originally the monumental entrance court to the Iseum Campense on the Campus Martius. It is not known for how long the obelisk stood on the spina of the circus.

A clearer egyptianising context can be reconstructed along the Via Appia antica in the second century AD villa of the Quintilii. During excavations in 1861-1862 a number of objects in Egyptian style were discovered which however nowadays have been lost. An Isis bust originating from the area, known under the name 'Roma Vecchia', has been preserved though. Near the villa was a mausoleum with a pyramidal shape. When this monument was being excavated remains of colossal sphinxes were found. An exact reconstruction of the context(s) of these Aegyptiaca seems impossible as the finds have only been documented through 19th century reports. Did it concern a grave monument in Egyptian style with an aedicula for Isis or was the villa of the Quintilii partially furnished in Egyptian style, or both? Lollio Barberi c.s. make a forced attempt to explain the presence of the Aegyptiaca through Commodus ("particolarmente legato ai culti egiziani e orientali"), who expropriated the villa and possessed it at the end of the second century AD. There are no real indications for this connection.

Along the Via Appia nuova was a sanctuary for Zeus Bronton. On the basis of the find of some Aegyptiaca, it can be concluded that in this cult place the Egyptian gods were also worshipped.

Along the Via Latina, a marble bust has been found of a boy with a so-called Harpocrates lock. The bust from the middle of the third century AD is part of a funerary context. Therefore a grave for the burial of, amongst others, a (young) follower of Isis can be reconstructed with certainty.

In Montebello, near the Via Flaminia, a number of mosaics was discovered in 1892 in the remains of what was perhaps a bath building. One of the best preserved examples, approximately 3 x 3 m, to be dated in the period around 100 AD, and now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, shows in the central emblema two Pharaonic figures next to a vat around which a snake is coiled. The other mosaics do not show Egyptian elements and it therefore seems to concern the use of an Egyptian scene as a decorative motif[501].

2.8.9 *Aegyptiaca from Rome from unknown context*

literature: *Malaise 1972a*, 234-237 sv. 434-442; *Roullet 1972*, 65-67 sv. 52-67 (relief fragments) and 132-140 (sphinxes); *De Vos 1980*, 1-3 sv. 1.

A reasonable number of Aegyptiaca originates from Rome but lacks any information on the findspot. This material is therefore not of value in showing the potential contexts of Aegyptiaca Romana, but it completes the overview of the Egyptian and egyptianising artefacts present in Rome. For that reason the most notable examples will be briefly discussed.

A relief from the Mattei collection shows a procession of persons connected with the cults of the Egyptian gods: two women, one of which with a snake and situla, the other with a sistrum and kyathos in her hands, a hierogrammateus and a priest carrying the holy Nile water. Also another relief, probably from the third century AD and now in Potsdam, shows a procession of Isis priests and adherents to the Egyptian cults[502].

In the collection of the J. Paul Getty Museum is a rare, small (7.6 cm) blue vase of cameo glass with an egyptianising decoration in white relief. The representation shows a small boy with a wreath in both hands in front of an altar on which Thoth is sitting; next another boy is depicted in front of an altar as well as a pharaoh sitting in front of an obelisk. The object would originate from Turkey, but in its most recent publication an origin from Rome is assumed. It is an egyptianising object; the vase would have been made in Italy during the Augustan period. Based on a religious interpretation of the various elements, Jucker has connected the object with Heliopolis; Harden suggests a connection with the erection of the two Egyptian obelisks by Octavian in 10 BC. Also a more general interpretation, in view of the popularity of Egyptian themes in that period in general, cannot be discarded[503].

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[501] The mosaic was published by O. Marucchi, Di un pavimento a mosaico con figure egizie, *BC* (1892) 160-174; cf. also A. Oliver, The Montebello mosaics, *AJA* 69 (1965) 268-270; *De Vos 1980*, 32-33 sv. 18 and *Werner 1994*, 94-96 sv. K38.

[502] Cf. *Malaise 1972a*, 234-236 sv. 441 and 442a.

[503] Inv. no. 85. AF. 84. Cf. Jucker, *Antike Kunst* 8 (1965) 46-53; *Harden 1987*, 83-

From various journals, descriptions of the city and illustrations, it is clear that in 16th century Rome a large number of re-erected sphinxes and egyptian lions were visible. Apart from the Iseum Campense, the typical Egyptian sphinxes, sphinx couples and lions will have been erected in many more places in classical Rome[504]. This also applies to the obelisks. Although there will certainly have been a confusion of obelisks in descriptions and illustrations, the number of (re-)erected obelisks in classical Rome seems to have been greater than is suggested by contextual reconstruction[505].

2.9 *Conclusion*

What is notable in the first place in this overview of Roman Aegyptiaca is their general occurrence: everywhere in ancient Rome there were Egyptian and egyptianising monuments and artefacts[506]. A good impression, albeit slightly romanticised, can be gained by imagining an envoy from the northern provinces of the Imperium who arrives in the city at the beginning of the first century AD in order to be received on the Capitol. Near the porta Flaminia the visitor passes a tomb in the shape of a pyramid and next he sees in the distance a gigantic obelisk looming up. He first passes the mausoleum of Augustus with two obelisks and egyptianising architectural fragments, before gazing at the sundial already mentioned. Soon however his attention is drawn by a nearby sanctuary, where, once inside, he is surrounded by Egyptian exotica. On the way to the Capitol, he passes through a district where some sphinxes liven up the street scene and all kinds of small aedicula for Isis and the Egyptian gods can be seen, while, having reached the temple of Apollo, he sees the same goddess on the terracotta decoration of this sanctuary. Seated in the imperial rooms he notes the many Egyptian elements in the wall paintings and when he casts a glance on the inner court decorated with statues, a black granite statue of an Egyptian pharaoh catches his eye.

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84 sv. 36 (with further previous literature) and *Masterpieces of the J. Paul Getty Museum. Antiquities* (1997) 104. Cf. now also *Söldner 1999*, 109-110 who sees some of the elements depicted as references to Augustan propaganda.

[504] Cf. for an impression *Roullet 1972*, sv. 268-299. Sphinxes also occurred as (relief)decoration on capitals and vases, see *De Vos 1997*, 130-131 for examples.

[505] An often recurring number in descriptions of (remains of) obelisks in Rome is 48, cf. *Iversen 1968*, esp. 178-187.

[506] Think also of the tens of Nilotic scenes and Nilotic Campana plates originating from Rome.

After the observation that objects or representations which evoked an association with Egypt are present everywhere in Rome, the huge diversity of this category of material culture is notable, both in appearance and in application. It concerns paintings, sculptures, terracottas and monuments which are applied in a large number of different contexts. There seem to be no constants visible between the use of a specific object and a specific context: obelisks can decorate a circus, a sundial, as well as a sanctuary, and even portrayals of Egyptian gods occur both in houses whose owners are not followers of the Egyptian gods and in private shrines and public sanctuaries. The aim of this chapter was to show these contexts in order to understand better the different associations of the classical observer. It should be noted that for various reasons the image acquired is far from clear. This is caused in the first place by the fact that the exact origin of the objects discussed is often not known. Even if the origin is clear, there are many uncertainties as to the interpretation of the findspot. And finally, when the interpretation of the context is clear, it seems that in one and the same context different functions can intermingle and that, therefore, the interpretation of the archaeological material cannot be equivocal.

Nevertheless, in order to structuralise, roughly three kinds of contexts can be distinguished. Firstly the religious one: public sanctuaries (temples on a larger terrain which were maintained by priests), larger or smaller sanctuaries for other (oriental) gods where the Egyptian gods were also worshipped, as well as smaller, private shrines and aediculae. The worshipping of Egyptian gods was the focal point here, though, for instance, for observers with a different religious background, very different aspects could have come to the fore. Secondly, there are contexts not directly connected with the Egyptian cults. Of course an individual observer, seeing a uraeus snake in a Roman house, could have given a religious interpretation to the picture; but the spot was not connected primarily with the Egyptian cults. In those cases, the decorative, exotic aspect would have played an important role. Thirdly, there are contexts in which the use of Aegyptiaca has a clearly political background: the aim of the Egyptian appearance was primarily to remind the observer of the civil war won by Octavian, after which Egypt became part of the Roman Empire.

This structuralisation of the Aegyptiaca of course does not exclude that the different kinds of contexts could have acquired later a very different, more general meaning. The Iseum Campense probably illustrates best the artificial character of the division: both religious, decorative-exotic and political aspects are expressed in the sanctuary, while also economic aspects might have come to the fore. Also paintings in the so-called sanctuary of Silvanus in Ostia show with how much restraint we have to treat such a generalising interpretation. The small room with wall-paintings of historical persons and gods, amongst them apart from Silvanus also Isis and Harpocrates, is located behind a bakery (the Caseggiato dei Molini, I iii, 1). The depiction of the Egyptian gods in this context seems in the first instance to refer to the grain: through the painting, the bakers wanted to thank the emperor, in this case Caracalla, for the employment thus granted to them[507]. The painting therefore seems an example of pictures of Egyptian gods in the Roman world which should primarily be interpreted against the background of the economic relations between Rome and Egypt; a category of meaning which does not even appear in the table below. This table 11 gives an overview of the contexts dealt with and attempts, as far as possible and with the above reservations in mind, to indicate their primary meaning[508].

3 *Aegyptiaca Romana: the meanings of a cultural phenomenon*

For the Abelam, a tribe in New Guinea, colour was one of the most important principles structuring society: distinction in colour was in many respects distinction in meaning. At the beginning of the 20th century it was observed during anthropological fieldwork that pieces were torn out of European magazines, which the Abelam now and then got hold of, which were then subsequently glued to the facade of ritual buildings. It usually concerned very colourful advertisements, mostly advertising food. The Abelam had no inkling of the original meaning of these depictions, but thought, on the basis of the colour and the incomprehensibility of the representations, that it concerned

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[507] Cf. E.M. Moormann, Mural paintings in the Sacello del Silvano, in: *Bakker 1994*, 262-272.

[508] For the sake of the overview the contexts described were fit in one or two of the categories distinguished. The restraint interpretations from the text are thus violated: the existence of a public sanctuary in region III is not as obvious as the Iseum Campense; private worship near S. Martino ai Monti can also be placed in the category 'part of other cult place'; etc.

Table 11. The contexts of Aegyptiaca preserved in Rome with their primary meaning.

	Directly connected with Egyptian cults			*Not clear*	*Exotic/ decorative*	*Political*
	Public sanctuary	Part of other cult place	Private shrine			
Iseum Met.			———			
Is./Ser. reg. III	———					
Castra Mis.				———		
Domus Aurea					———	
Iunius Bassus					———	
S. Martino			———			
Isis Patricia				———		
nymph. S. Eus					———	
Circus Var.					———	
Cleopatra?				———		
Ser. Quirinal	———					
Castra Praet.				———		
Horti Sallust.					———	
Isis Capitolina			———			
Rep. coins					———	
Theatre M./FB			———			
Iseum Camp.	———					
Delta				———		
Maus. Aug.					———	———
Sundial					———	———
pyramid PdP					———	
Aula Is./CdA					———	———
Apollo temple						———
Domus Tib.			———			
Domus Flavia			———			———
Antinoüs				———		
Circus Max.					———	———
Reg. XII			———	———		
S. Sabina			———			
Aventine		———				
Cestius					———	
Via dC.				———		
necropolis			———			
detto Egitto					———	
vigna Bon.				———		
Gianicolo		———				
Tiber island				———		
Tiber				———		
Extra Muros		———		———	———	
without context				———		

European religious symbols, which subsequently for that reason were applied to their own ritual buildings[509].

This illustration, borrowed from anthropology, shows an extreme example of the change in meaning which objects can experience when, released from their original context, they are re-used in a different social context. The presence of depictions of tomato soup in religious contexts in New Guinea cannot primarily be explained from the meaning of these depictions in the original, European context. Although to some Romans, and certainly to the Egyptians in Italy, the original meaning of Egyptian and egyptianising monuments and artefacts would have been known, we should seriously consider the possibility that in general the original meaning of the Aegyptiaca Romana does not matter in the reconstruction of their meaning in the Roman world. Just as with the Abelam, the context in which the re-use takes place (New Guinea, the Roman world) and the relation between the two social contexts (Abelam versus Europe, Romans versus Egypt), should be investigated in order to understand the new meaning.

The example of the Abelam is used here to illustrate in extremis the change in meaning which material culture can experience used in a different context. As said before, the perception of Egyptian and egyptianising cultural goods in Rome, where knowledge of the Egyptian culture was available, and where moreover Egyptians lived, would have been much more diverse. A good impression of that diversity, and thereby of the direction in which the final archaeological interpretation will have to go, can be obtained from the book *Entangled objects* by the Australian cultural anthropologist Thomas. On the basis of a number of examples such as the Abelam, he concludes first:

> "(–) that objects are not what they were made to be but what they have become; this in contradiction with a pervasive identification in material culture studies which stabilizes the identity of a thing in its fixed and founded material form."

an observation which fits in with the conclusions drawn in this chapter concerning the occurrence of Aegyptiaca Romana[510]. Utilisation in the non-original context is a process of creative recontextualisation, in which the original meaning is always, to a greater or lesser degree, manipulated. Such artefacts should therefore not be regarded as simple goods but as "historicized artifacts (–), valuables with a heavy cultural burden"[511]. Thomas' illustration of these thoughts is a case study concerning European colonists and the indigenous population of islands in the Pacific in, mainly, the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. There was exchange of goods on a large scale between the two groups, through which Thomas looks at the appreciation of the material culture of the Fijians by the Europeans and vice versa. The European appreciation of the, for them, exotic objects proves to be very diverse[512]. The first travellers and explorers thought examples of the material culture of the Fijians mainly strange and took objects back to Europe to show that they actually had been in the area. In some cases, however, such exotica in European contexts can be regarded more specifically, as a kind of trophy. The person concerned had himself portrayed, for instance, with some exotica in the background which then referred to an achievement or quality which was considered important. Missionaries sent many indigenous statues of gods home to show that the Fijians really did convert to Christianity and had renounced their idols: "Idols thus provided an extremely powerful mechanism through which the fact of conversion could be materially expressed and displayed" to quote Thomas; they had become "converted artifacts"[513]. In the view of the planters every indigenous object referred to aspects of cannibalism, underdevelopment, etc. And finally, Fijian artefacts were used at colonial exhibitions, amongst other things, to testify to the productive capacity of the indigenous population. Therefore, at least five explanatory models can be formulated for the presence of Fijian exotica in a European context: 1. curiosity (earliest travellers), 2. reference to personal achievement (individual), 3. to demonstrate conversion (missionaries), 4. animosity (planters) and 5. signs of (industrial) capacity. Theoretically this diversity is further extended by examples which cannot be fitted into the system: planters with a profound ethnographic interest; an explorer with scientific interests and pretensions, etc.

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[509] See A. Forge, Learning to see in New Guinea, in: P. Mayer (ed.), *Socialization. The approach from social anthropology* (1970) 269-291, esp. 286.

[510] *Thomas 1991*, 4.

The manner of interpretation of material culture advocated by Thomas therefore emphasises what can be called the 'cultural biography' of objects and under this notion, the approach has also become popular within archaeological studies. This seems the result of a notion which has developed ever stronger within the social studies in general in the past two decades, namely that material culture is not solely the background against which human actions take place, but that objects and people influence each other continuously and provide meanings to eachother. The meaning of an artefact should therefore be understood from this social (inter)action and would become far less clear from the investigation of the artefact alone: "Meaning emerges from social action and the purpose of an artefact biography is to illuminate that process"[514]. Archaeological application of these insights has been directed mainly at modification of the 'gift and exchange' model, a discussion which seems mainly relevant for prehistoric archaeology. Within historical archaeology the book by Appadurai seems therefore deservedly have become popular[515].

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[511] *Thomas 1991*, 105.

[512] *Thomas 1991*, Ch. IV.

[513] *Thomas 1991*, 151 and 156 for the quotations.

Both a detailed investigation of the Nilotic scenes (Ch. III) and a critical synthesis of the occurrence of Aegyptiaca Romana in general (Ch. IV 1) have shown that a relation with the cults of the Egyptian gods forms only one of the explanatory models for the occurrence of Egyptian or egyptianising artefacts in a Roman context. The search undertaken in this paragraph for the meaning of the Aegyptiaca preserved in Rome (Ch. IV 2) underpins this conclusion. To do justice to the meaning of this part of the interaction between Egypt and Rome, it should be defined as a cultural phenomenon; a cultural phenomenon of which the religious component forms an important part.

A comparison with the relations between Greece and Rome illustrates this conclusion. Greek (material) culture had a great influence on the Roman world. To what extent is perhaps best illustrated by the statement of Horace who remarked that (militarily) conquered Greece was in cultural respects far superior to its conqueror Rome[516]. Against the background of this cultural influence, the presence of statues of Greek gods and heroes in Italy therefore does not come as a surprise. The find of the so-called Venus of the Esquiline, for instance, did not make any archaeologist reconstruct a sanctuary for the goddess Venus in that spot[517]. Although to a more modest extent, the interaction between Egyptian and Roman culture should be reconstructed in a similar manner. It is generally assumed that, for instance, a nymphaeum in the *horti* Lamiani, decorated in the times of Commodus with statues with a Dionysiac character, refers to the triumph of Dionysos and abundance in a more general sense; we are not dealing with a cult place for Dionysos here, though religious aspects do play an important role[518]. Such a reconstruction seems primarily also most likely for a nymphaeum decorated with statues of Isis. Where in the Roman handling and adoption of the Greek cultural heritage such aspects seem to be the focus, as providing oneself with a fitting cultural attire for the newly acquired status, wealth and power of the Imperium, exotic and political aspects seem to have played an important role in the Roman adoption of the Egyptian cultural heritage. The sketching of this sociological background, against which the occurrence of Aegyptiaca Romana can perhaps be understood even better, will be the focus of the third part of this research (Ch. V).

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[514] I take as example a recent volume of *World Archaeology* to illustrate this interest within archaeological theory: Y. Marshall, C. Gosden (eds.), The cultural biography of objects, *World Archaeology* 31-2 (1999). Cf. 170 for the quotation.

[515] *Appadurai 1986*. See, e.g., G.J.M. van Wijngaarden, *Use and appreciation of Mycenaean pottery outside Greece. Contexts of LHI-LHIIIb finds in the Levant, Cyprus and Italy* (diss. UvA 1999), for another application of these ideas.

[516] Horace, *Epistulae* II, 1, 156-157.

Hence Aegyptiaca Romana had different meanings in different contexts. This in itself empty statement, which in fact applies to all material culture, has however acquired meaning in the paragraphs above by the constants which have been demonstrated: the three main meanings attributed to the cultural phenomenon are religiously, exotically-decoratively and politically tinted.

Furthermore, it is important to realise that phenomena or objects, with whatever meaning, can at certain times become so popular that a fashion is created. Manifestations of such a temporary common use are often only vaguely and indirectly connected with the original meaning of it. Just as in the Renaissance, when the fascination for everything connected with Antiquity also had become fashionable ("Denn für viele war das Altertum überhaupt nur eine Mode, selbst für solche, die darin sehr gelehrt waren"), the popularity of Aegyptiaca in certain periods (Italy around the beginning of the Christian era, Pompeii round AD 70) should probably also mainly be understood as fashionable[519]. The notion Egyptomania can well be used to define this phenomenon, though the situation can certainly not be compared in all respects with the European interest in the Egyptian culture and visual language, which was created wholesale after Napoleon's expedition[520]. Nevertheless, there are remarkable similarities which can increase insight into the Roman situation.

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[517] For this statue see section 2.3.6 and further *De Vos 1994*, 150-151.

[518] Cf. *Le tranquille dimore degli dei*, 32.

Besides fashion, the application of a specific visual language, such as the Egyptian, is also for other reasons a more general phenomenon in Roman society. A confrontation with the Roman handling of aspects of Greek culture can again be illuminating as a parallel. The repertoire of preserved statues decorating Roman villae also shows Egyptian themes, alongside the many Greek objects. Statues of Egyptian gods and animals have sofar been found in seven villae, while an Egyptian furnishing of recreational areas in houses and villae was frequently demonstrated with regard to the Nilotic scenes[521]. Especially in discussing, in the catalogue, the Pompeian houses where Nilotic landscapes have been preserved, it showed that there existed an egyptianising style of decorating; many times the Nilotic scene in question was not the only Nilotic or egyptianising element in the decoration of the house[522]. In his discussion of the villa dei Papyri, Neudecker reconstructed the function of the recovered statues in general as: "Im 'otium' eine gräzisierende lustvolle Stimmung zu erzeugen sowie die Bedürfnisse nach Prunk und Repräsentation zu

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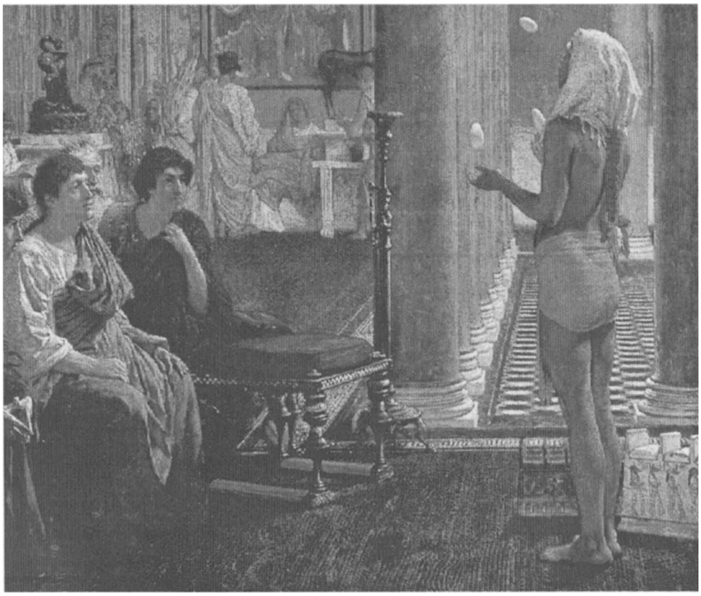
[519] Cf. *Burckhardt*, 228 for the quotation.

[520] Cf. for a discussion of the phenomenon of Egyptomania as fashionable in 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th century Europe, Ch. V 1.3.1. See further Ch. V 4.

[521] Cf. for a discussion of six of these contexts and the found Aegyptiaca, *Neudecker 1988*, sv. no. 13, 38, 39, 47, and no. 66 and 48 n. 458. A small alabaster statue of Isis from a villa near San Vicenzo a Cecina (Liguria) can be added, cf. *Iside* sv. V. 143.

[522] Most remarkable in this respect are the house of P.C. Tages (cat. no. 035), the Casa del Menandro (cat. nos. 036 and 037), the Casa di Sallustio (cat. no. 042), the Casa del Bracciale d'oro (cat. no. 048), the Casa delle Quadrighe (cat. no. 050), the Casa della Caccia antica (cat. no. 051), the Casa del Centenario (cat. no. 065) and the villa dei Misteri (cat. no. 067). See the corpus (Ch. II) for a description of these houses and the egyptianising elements in their decoration. Nilotic landscapes are, of course, not necessarily part of such a decoration. See, e.g., the Casa del Frutteto/dei Cubiculi floreali (I 9, 5) where all kinds of Egyptian and egyptianising details can be seen in the painted wall decoration of two cubiculi, but no Nilotic landscapes. Note that with regard to Pompeii there also might be a practical explanation for the popularity of egyptianising themes after 62 AD: a team of decorators apparently specialised, amongst other things, in this kind of decoration.



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erfüllen". Although to a more modest extent than the Greek visual language and with a slightly different articulation, also the Egyptian one seems to have been adopted and copied for these reasons. In addition to the three original, principal meanings described above, the occurrence of Aegyptiaca Romana can therefore sometimes be understood more practically, for instance as a fashion phenomenon, or as a visual language which had to serve specific functions within the Roman house. This amalgam of different meanings, which can even enclose one and the same artefact, is aptly illustrated in a painting by L. Alma-Tadema[523]. Of course his 19th century imagination of the private life of a Roman patrician family cannot be used to underline the conclusions drawn in this chapter. It does, however, aptly illustrate them. Alma-Tadema shows us a Roman interior stocked with luxury objects and peopled with idle, privileged Romans who are served and entertained by slaves who come from the Empire's subject nations. The juggler can be identified as an Egyptian, as also becomes clear from the objects at his feet. These are clearly shabti-boxes, with depictions of Egyptian gods associated with death. In this Roman context, however, these ritual objects seemingly function as boxes used by the Egyptian to keep his juggling accessories; yet another possible meaning of Aegyptiaca Romana[524].

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[523] 'Un jongleur' (opus 77), 1870, now in the collection of Stanley J. Allen. See M. Liversidge, C. Edwards, *Imagining Rome. British artists and Rome in the nineteenth century* (1996) 136-138 sv. 48 and, also in general, V.G. Swanson, *The biography and catalogue raisonné of the paintings of Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema* (1990).

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[524] In reality shabti-boxes have not been preserved in Italy; the painting simply underlines, once again, the many hypothetical meanings of Aegyptiaca Romana. For Egyptian shabti-boxes see D.A. Aston, The shabti-box: a typological study, *OMRO* 74 (1994) 21-54, with many examples, also from the BM, London, where Alma-Tadema probably will have seen them.

PART V

THE ROMAN DISCOURSE ON EGYPT RECONSTRUCTED

THE ROMAN DISCOURSE ON EGYPT RECONSTRUCTED

"Audiebamus Alexandriam, nunc cognoscimus"[525]

It has become clear in the previous chapters that Nilotic scenes can be seen as representations of the Nile during the annual flood, which functioned in the Roman world in various ways and with various meanings. Nilotic scenes are however also Roman depictions of Egypt and that is interesting for a number of reasons. In particular in anthropology one has increasingly come to realise in the past decades that the image of the Other is in fact also a narration about the self[526]. In other words: the depiction or representation of a different culture says as much about the depictor's own culture as about the culture of the depicted. This implies that Nilotic scenes are perhaps partly a Roman construction of Egypt, which does not necessarily correspond with Egyptian reality.

Nilotic scenes can therefore provide information on sociologically tinged aspects of Roman society, because they form a reflection of the Roman perception of Egypt. There is more source material available in order to come to a reconstruction of this perception: literary texts in which Roman authors comment on Egypt, for instance, or historical data. In order to indicate the Roman image of Egypt, as well as the different forms in which this image took shape and was reflected, sometimes the notion 'discourse' will be used in this chapter. I define discourse as a system of meaningful acting with a more or less explicit narrative structure. In this chapter, the Nilotic scenes in particular and Aegyptiaca Romana in general will therefore be investigated as parts of a structure that explains something about the system to which it refers: the Roman image of Egypt.

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[525] Cicero, *Rab. Post*, 35. For this quotation see section 3.1.1.

[526] For specific references cf. the sections below. Literature on the subject is in the mean time "overflowing the banks". I have opted for selective references in this chapter because the examples are nowhere discussed in their own right; they only serve as parallels for a better understanding of the Roman situation. A useful, general introduction to the issue is R. Corbey, J. Leerssen (eds.), *Alterity, identity, image: self and other in society and scholarship* (1991). The value of this approach for the study of ancient Greece can be judged from a recent volume edited by B. Cohen, *Not the classical ideal. Athens and the construction of the Other in Greek art* (2000). The Introduction (3-20) has a useful paragraph on "The Other in twentieth-century theory and classical scholarship".

What makes the investigation of this Roman discourse about Egypt especially interesting, is the very diverse role which the country of the Nile played for the Romans. In the third century BC, Alexandria and Egypt formed the symbol of the culturally superior Hellenistic world, of economic abundance, and of a centuries' old and impressive civilisation. The role of the country altered with the dramatic changes of political relations in the second century BC: Egypt became a vassal of Rome and the kings of the once so powerful realm begged in Rome for money and influence[527]. Another important change occurs when in 30 BC Egypt is added to the Empire as an imperial province. The Romans are now the coloniser and Nilotic scenes therefore depictions of a colonised culture by that coloniser. We can therefore expect that the Roman image of Egypt will not be unequivocal.

An attempt will be made in this chapter to illustrate and analyse the Roman discourse in relation to Egypt, Egyptians and the Egyptian culture. It will therefore be necessary to first investigate two more general aspects which form, as it were, the base of the pyramid, whereby the final discussion of the Roman image of Egypt is the pyramidion. Hence, the chapter is built up from general to specific and starts with the sketch of a general theoretical framework: what kind of discourse do other, imperial, powers construct about culturally very different, exotic cultures with which they are confronted? Are patterns visible which may help to understand better the Roman discourse on Egypt? Subsequently, the Roman attitude in relation to the Other in general will be investigated. How did the Romans view coloured people, foreigners and cultures unknown to them? To conclude, the insights acquired will be used to further explain the Roman image of Egypt, after as many ancient sources as possible have been presented first which can illuminate this.

The quotation by Cicero summarises well the issue to be dealt with here and hopefully also makes the reader curious about the search which will be undertaken in this chapter. In the formulation of the meaning of Aegyptiaca Romana in chapter IV, certain constants were indeed found in the association of the classical observer (religious, exotic-decorative, political), yet these will only really take shape by the sketching of the sociological background against which they functioned. Cicero's statement, made during his defence of a Roman eques in the hope of discrediting Alexandrian witnesses, suggests that there was a specific image of Egypt, or, at least, of Alexandria. It emphasises the value of imagination within Roman society and thus the importance of the analysis advocated in this chapter: Aegyptiaca Romana as expression of the Roman attitude toward Egypt and Egyptians.

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[527] Cf. Ch. I 1.1.

1 *Imagining the Other: a theoretical framework*

> *"Moi, j'ai déjà perdu, royaume à royaume, et, province à province, la plus belle moitié de l'univers, et bientôt je ne vais plus savoir où réfugier mes rêves; mais c'est l'Egypte que je regrette le plus d'avoir chassée de mon imagination, pour la loger tristement dans mes souvenirs !... Toi, tu crois encore à l'ibis, au lotus pourpré, au Nil jaune; tu crois au palmier d'émeraude, au nopal, au chameau peut-être... Hélas ! l'ibis est un oiseau sauvage, le lotus un oignon vulgaire; le Nil est une eau rousse à reflets d'ardoise, le palmier a l'air d'un plumeau grêle, le nopal n'est qu'un cactus, le chameau n'existe qu'à l'état de dromadaire, les almées sont des mâles, et quant aux femmes véritables, il paraît qu'on est heureux de ne pas les voir."* *(Gérard de Nerval)*[528]

There is no model for the imagination of the Other that can be simply applied to the Roman situation. This is logical as the process each time takes shape in a different way under different historical circumstances, with different interested parties: *the* imagination of the Other does not exist. Yet there seem to exist certain patterns, processes which recur time and time again. The depiction of the Other through the process of 'negative self-definition', a notion which will be discussed and illustrated extensively later, is the most qualifying and most constant example thereof. A number of examples will be reviewed in this section of what a discourse on the Other can look like and how it can take shape. Together these examples, which, of course, have not been chosen arbitrarily, form a framework on the basis of which the Roman discourse on Egypt will be better understood. The quotation of Nerval thereby is a concrete illustration of Cicero's aphorism at the beginning of this chapter. It not only emphasises again the great role that imagination plays in the perception of the Other in general, but also shows that, at least for Nerval,

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[528] See *Aubaude 1997*, 51 with references.

Egypt specifically plays a prominent role here. To his dismay, Nerval's 'Egypt' turns out to be an 'image of Egypt' which cannot stand up to a confrontation with reality and it is precisely *this* humiliation which he regrets most.

1.1 *The European perception of the Americas after 1492*

"Reality is constructed through the work of imagination"[529]. This observation forms the point of departure of a book by Mason in which an attempt is made to deconstruct the European perception of the Americas. This statement implies that the European perception of America would have nothing to do with a reality, but should be seen as European fiction. Mason therefore sees the European discourse on the Americas as an imaginary world which is constructed from a collection of notions. He wants to deconstruct this imaginary world, that is to say, to map and investigate the notions of which it consists, in order to show the imaginary character. For archaeologists, Mason's book is probably not the most accessible introduction to the issue dealt with here. His mapping of this unique example of European imagination does however show clearly a number of processes that also occur more generally, but less pregnantly, and will prove to be important in the investigation of the Roman image of Egypt. Besides, the book is quite extreme in its views and thus illustrative. For those reasons Mason's case-study on the unforeseen introduction to an exotic, unknown world, that caused the European perception of the world to be profoundly readjusted, does form the first section of this theoretical framework[530].

With an intensive introduction to foreign objects, plants and animals, or people, an attempt is usually made to make the unknown more manageable and more understandable through classification. This occurred also in the Spanish introduction to the different Indian tribes; different 'groups' were given different names. At first sight these seem reasonably objective, ethnographic definitions. However, classification is often based on ones own representations of reality, in which very different criteria than ethnographical ones can play a role. It turns out that the Spanish definitions of 'groups' of American Indians are in fact based on the reaction of the inhabitants of the conquered areas to the presence of the Spanish in their area. Peaceful inhabitants of a certain area (e.g. the Arawak) were distinguished from inhabitants who defended themselves against the Spanish (e.g. the Carib), whereas in reality it could concern one tribe or five different ethnographic groups. This classification is therefore more a 15th, 16th century Spanish image of reality than a reality; more imaginary than real, Mason argues.

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[529] *Mason 1990,* 16. The book is quoted after the dissertation draft.

[530] A short and more accessible introduction to the issue, in which many of the themes dealt with in the book are also discussed, is: P. Mason, Notes on cormorant fishing: Europe and its other, *Ibero-Amerikanisches Archiv* N.F. 13 (1987) 147-174. Other useful publications on the European acquaintance with the Americas specifically: T. Todorov, *La conquête de l'Amérique: la question de l'autre* (1982); T. Lemaire, *De Indiaan in ons bewustzijn. De ontmoeting van de Oude met de Nieuwe wereld* (1986) and P. Hulme, *Colonial encounters: Europe and the native Caribbean 1492-1797* (1992).

After classification, assimilation is usually a next step in giving the unknown a place in one's own world. The unknown is in fact often brought into one's own perception, defined within one's own terms, in order to be understandable[531]. Mason concludes that Europe does this in the confrontation with Indian cultures in two different ways. On the one hand, reverting to traditional images in order to shape the new, on the other hand projecting one's own 'internal self'[532]. What does he mean by this?

In order to shape the New World, one was guided in Europe by the tradition of the Plinian races. This worldview from Antiquity has mainly been preserved through Pliny's *Naturalis Historia*, in which the non-Greek and non-Roman inhabitants of the world are described[533]. Pliny is in the tradition of Greek ethnography and it is therefore permissible to see in his treatise the reflection of a world view which was generally valid in Antiquity. Pliny follows in his description of the Other a large number of principles already used by Herodotos. Thus geographical distance is equated with differences in eating habits, sexual customs and cultural development: the larger the geographical distance to Greece, the more different the eating pattern, etc. It is therefore not surprising that, according to Pliny, the most peculiar races occurred in India and Aethiopia. In Antiquity, these two areas function as a metaphor to indicate 'very far away at the edge of the world'. Regional specification or topographically correct information is far less important. Also concerning their physical appearance, these strange races were defined in terms of abnormalities: pygmies are small, cyclops only have one eye, etc. This process, which seems to be present almost unavoidably in the description of the Other, is called negative self-definition: the Other is described in terms of negative differences in relation to one's own world. Based mainly on the world view of the Plinian races, the type of the uncivilised male savage was defined iconographically in 15th century Europe as follows: 1. long hair covering the whole body, except the face, 2. feet, hands and breasts like a woman, 3. naked or only dressed in wraps, with 4. a club or a piece of a tree as weapon. The savage was thus in all respects the opposite of the idealised image of the non-hairy, male, well-dressed knight carrying a sword. In the description of the New World, this, in fact literary, image of the exotic Other is projected on American reality; the first depictions of American Indians, e.g., show them with very long hair. This is in stark contrast with reality, but it was simply how one imagined an exotic savage to look like. A 'depiction of reality' is in this case therefore mainly determined by the imagination of the depictor, Mason concludes[534]. Such a way of describing and depicting the Other is for that matter a very natural phenomenon: when somebody belonging to culture x tells something about culture y to another person of culture x, who does not know culture y, then the easiest way to make himself clear is by indicating what that unknown culture y does not have in relation to the known culture x. To illustrate: 'Eskimo' means 'eater of raw meat'; people or groups of people are named after their typical, i.e. different qualities. In a moral respect the different qualities are always regarded as inferior to one's own culture[535].

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[531] See also *Hartog 1980*, 225-269 who describes and illustrates these processes ("traduire, nommer, classer") on the basis of Herodotos' attitude toward foreign cultures.

[532] *Mason 1990*, 47.

[533] See for the influential effect of the *Naturalis Historia*, J. Block Friedman, *The monstruous races in Medieval art and thought* (1981).

The projection of norms, values and taboos typical for every culture is usually realised again via this process of negative self-definition. Besides the Plinian races, the Americas were also depicted by Europeans on the basis of oppositions to dominant notions in one's own culture. Mainly aspects were thereby projected which could not easily find a place in European culture: the Indian was everything the

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[534] *Mason 1990*, 58.

[535] Cf. for a further explanation of this concept and concrete illustrations *Müller 1972* and *Vandenbroeck 1987*, 5-6 ("Zelfbeeld en het beeld van de Andere zijn dialectisch met elkaar verweven: het ene kan niet zonder het andere bestaan") and 141-148. For the Roman situation specifically see *Dauge 1981*, esp. 36.

European was not, or better, did not want to be. Stereotypes thus created, show the American Indians as cannibals, as worshippers of the devil and as sexually overactive and perverse. Time and again these four projections return in the characterisations of the American Indians in pictures and text. The evaluation of the American Indians was not purely negative though, even when thus depicted. Their living in unspoilt liberty was seen as a positive aspect; the beginning of a romantic view of the exotic Other, which would blosom in particular in the 18th century and continues until today. The depiction of an Indian urinating publicly would, according to Mason, combine these two views: on the one hand it shows the Other as animal, on the other as natural[536]. The notion uncivilised in the negative and positive sense of the word.

When the American Indians, after some time, are identified with one's own, European, culture, they are associated with the lowest social classes. After a European image of the American Indians is thus first created, this construction is subsequently used to characterise groups in one's own society: remote areas without developments are called 'America', those that do not adhere to the orthodox belief are 'Indians', etc.[537]. This narration offers the possibility to separate the country from the inhabitants of that country: the Americas are beautiful and full of potential; however the Indian inhabitants are uncivilised. Colonial presence can thus be justified.

Mason argues in conclusion, in theoretical respect heavily leaning on Derrida, that the discourse described above functions as a language and is also structured as a language. The function of it would be:

> "to provide a form of articulation: the articulation of self upon other"[538].

Physical characteristics are very conspicuous and for that reason important in the articulation. That is the reason why precisely the Plinian races, as part of the discourse, are so important: they articulate enormously. The great variety of the discourse turns this into a flexible language which has the aim of bridging the distance to the unknown. What is notable in the European discourse on the Americas is that mainly economic and sexual aspects play a role. Contrary to Herodotos, for instance, who tries to design an intellectual system to keep the world understandable, geographical and political aspects play no role of any significance[539].

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[536] *Mason 1990*, 60. Cf. also *Vandenbroeck 1987*, 18-21 ("wildheid: aantrekking en afstoting").

[537] *Mason 1990*, 77 ff. Cf. also *Vandenbroeck 1987*.

[538] *Mason 1990*, 111.

> "So in text and image the difference by which the native peoples of America are constructed as Europe's others is a sexual and economic difference. (–) Text and image are not reflective but signifying. (–) The discourses on America, as presented in texts and images, are America."[540]

Depictions of America would therefore in fact only re-present themselves and not refer to an existing reality.

The discourse on America took shape, amongst other things in the form of depictions which were sometimes distributed on a large scale and thus influenced the European perception of the New World. One particular publication is interesting in that respect, viz. the series *Les Grands Voyages* published from 1590 onwards by the de Bry brothers, in which some twenty important voyages of discovery to the Americas are described and illustrated. Mainly on the basis of a structuralistic analysis of the images by Bucher, these depictions by Europeans of a non-European, exotic world will be briefly discussed here[541].

First of all, the context of existence is thereby very important. The illustrated journals appeared from 1590 onwards, a century after the actual journey. Extensive archival research was therefore done before the publication of the books. In 1619, for instance, a volume appeared on the journeys of Vespucci, which had taken place round 1500, edited by de Bry and his assistants themselves. They were Huguenots, living and working in Strasbourg. It seems obvious that they had strongly anti-catholic feelings and that the purely catholic sources on the journeys have thus been manipulated. In this way, the protestants played at second hand an important role in the discovery of the New World in general. This is one of the causes which makes *Les Grands Voyages* into an amalgam of very heterogeneous information, illustrated and interpreted in different ways and by different people. Another cause is the inconsistency of de Bry in his function as editor. Usually an engraving illustrates a part of the text; sometimes however he deviates from this logical principle. For instance, he includes a plate of Adam and Eve to make clear that he thinks paradise should be located in the Indies. He even publishes two engravings which intrinsically have nothing to do with the subject dealt with, because he read an anecdote to which these depictions refer, in a book on the Americas. For these kinds of reasons, a coherent narrative structure can therefore sometimes be very inconsistent.

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[539] Cf. for Herodotos' representation of the Other, *Hartog 1980.*

[540] *Mason 1990*, 209-210.

[541] *Bucher 1977.* Cf. also *Vandenbroeck 1987*, 24-26 and, for the travel accounts specifically, R.R. Mautner Wasserman, *Exotic nations. Literature and cultural identity in the United States and Brazil, 1830-1930* (1994) 34-68 (Ch. 2: First accounts).

Bucher defines the aim of her analysis as follows:

> "C'est la formation d'une idéologie, encore inconsciente d'elle même, masquée sous les lignes hiéroglyphiques de l'image que nous découvrirons et dont il nous importe de savoir quel rapport elle entretient avec la connaissance avouée du Nouveau Monde et des conduites réelles à son égard."[542].

The author does this by looking for constants and variations in the representation of the New World which she believes to be meaningful, and she focuses on a motif which occurs notably often: "la sauvage aux seins pendants". This motif has a long iconographical tradition and knows diverse applications. Bucher concludes that up to part IX of *Les Grand Voyages*, the occurrence of the savage woman is an exception which can every time be well explained within the context. However, from part X onwards the motif becomes the standard form of depicting the Indian woman and occurs much more frequently, also in a much wider association than before. Bucher explains this change by pointing to the changed European attitude in relation to the Americas in that period. Just in that time there was a move to systematic colonisation. The representation of the indigenous population as savages would as underlying ideology have had the aim, according to Bucher, to justify this colonisation and Christianisation[543].

1.2 *Europe and the non-European Other*

In the discussion of the European discourse on the Americas after 1492 in the above section, it is shown that the confrontation with the Other often leads to the observation of a difference that needs explaining. The way in which this difference is explained often appears to be a form of projection: the other culture is defined on the basis of dominant notions in one's own culture. These projections change in the course of time but always remain, as different as they may be, constructions which fit in particular also in the context in which they are created[544].

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[542] *Bucher 1977*, xii.

[543] *Bucher 1977*, 196.

In Renaissance Europe, the Other is defined on the basis of the belief so dominant in that period: he is non-Christian. The Other is thus equated with lunatics in the sense that he can still be saved; he can still be converted[545]. This is what Paul III means when he declares in 1573 that American Indians are real people: they can still be converted and are not yet definitely lost to Christianity. Within this framework and from a commercial point of view, unknown territories are interesting; ethnography as a goal does not play any role. During the Age of Reason, *belief* as principle structuring society is partly replaced by *knowledge*, and the Other is thus mainly defined as ignorant, not having any knowledge. In the attitude toward the Other there is no longer lack of interest; as not civilised he now gets a place in world society. However, that knowledge was still mainly regarded as Christian knowledge becomes clear from the fact that the not-civilised are often ranked with the inhabitants of the Classical world: both groups are not enlightened and ignorant. It was thus attempted to keep the Other within one's own perception of the world[546].

In the 19th century the idea of geological time was created and with it evolutionary thinking, by which the notion of *time* is placed between Europe and the Other. The developing anthropological discipline leans heavily on the principle of historical genealogy; the difference with the Other has thereby become 'natural'. The notion non-European is thus in fact replaced by pre-European: the non-

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[544] Cf. *McGrane 1989*, on which this section is mainly based. He describes these changed projections as being a "perpetually present identity crisis in reference to the Other". In this section, and the following ones, the European imagination will be discussed. For the non-European imagination of Europe and Europeans, often showing the same processes, see, e.g., M. Schipper, *Imagining insiders. Africa and the question of belonging* (1999).

[545] This, for instance, in contrast with Muslims who are not potential Christians, and therefore adversaries.

[546] Euhemerism, a rational explanation of classical mythology, was for instance used in order to continue the definition of classical man as not enlightened; it was difficult to conceive the European predecessor as fundamentally different.

European Other would be at the stage of European prehistory[547]. Also 19th century anthropology is therefore not interested in who the exotic Other is, but in what he reflects in relation to the European observer: by formulating the category 'primitive', one's own progress is defined[548]. Also a romantic view is created as a result of the discovery of the notion time as an explanatory model for the difference between self and Other: primitive societies would reflect a more original naturalness.

Concerning the 20th century, it could be stated that the notion *culture* is employed as an explanatory principle. Travelling has played an important role in the development of the notion of cultural difference. Yet also this explanation says more about the European context in which it was created than about the other culture. There is indeed an awareness of the existence of several cultures of which ours is only one, but the fact that European culture has introduced such a relativisation supposes in fact a superior position. We are the ones distinguishing the notion of being different and are giving this alterity a place within a system, not them[549]. Ironically, even 20th century anthropology can therefore be seen in many respects as a discourse on the self on the basis of the investigation of other cultures[550].

1.3 *The European imagination of Egypt from the Middle Ages onwards*

After looking briefly at the attitude towards the Other in a more general sense, it is important to look specifically at the European image of Egypt, after the period of Antiquity of course, as this may perhaps show more concrete resemblances with the Roman situation. As the same country is the subject of imagination, perhaps certain traditions and stereotypes are similar[551]. For instance, De Vos labelled as Egyptomania the Egyptian and egyptianising motifs in wall-paintings and mosaics from Latium and Campania from the early imperial era. Is that justified?

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[547] Cf. in general *Fabian 1983* and for this specifically W. Roebroeks, Das Bild vom Urmenschen im Wandel der Zeit: Zur Geschichte der heutigen Auffassungen und Auseinandersetzungen in der Urgeschichtsforschung, *RGZM* 40 (1993) 3-25.

[548] *Fabian 1983*, 157: "The 'we' of anthropology (–) remains an exclusive 'we', one that leaves its Other outside on all levels of theorizing" and "primitive being (–) a category, not an object of western thought".

[549] Cf. *McGrane 1989*, 122: "Belief in relativity is a universal characteristic of sophisticated thinking", whereas, "Absoluteness is the characteristic defining naive thinking". Thus the own superiority is maintained, whereas the other as independent culture still seems to get an equivalent place.

[550] *McGrane 1989*, 125: "Anthropology lives by seeing and interpreting everything as culture-bound (–) everything but itself". How convincing the alternative is that McGrane tries to formulate in his *Beyond Anthropology* is not our concern here. See in general the publications of Clifford Geertz for the restriction of anthropology in these respects.

Egypt was relatively late in becoming accessible to western travellers, as the country was initially ruled by the Mameluks who were hostile to the Europeans. Only in the 17th and in particular in the 18th century was the country intensively travelled in and knowledge about the antiquities, flora and fauna, inhabitants and customs thus penetrated Europe. Napoleon's expedition and the subsequent publication of the *Description de l'Egypte* played a large role in that[552]. The image of Egypt before that period was mainly based on remains of Egyptian culture which had survived in Rome, or via Roman authors, and, to a lesser extent, on some journals[553]. From the Middle Ages until the 17th century, Rome has therefore been the connecting link with the country of the Nile. Egyptian antiquities, and in particular the goddess Isis, thus received much attention[554]. This changes from the 17th and 18th century onwards when knowledge about Egypt becomes more general and wider; Pharaonic Egypt however will always continue to play an important role in the imagination of the country[555].

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[551] In general: S. Morenz, *Die Begegnung Europas mit Ägypten* (1968) and G. Sievernich, H. Budde, *Europa und der Orient* (1989), with various articles specifically on Egypt.

[552] Cf., in general, H.D. Schneider, *De ontdekking van de Egyptische kunst, 1798-1830* (1998).

[553] Cf. for these early journals A. Khattab, *Das Ägyptenbild in den deutschsprachigen Reisebeschreibungen der Zeit von 1285-1500* (1982); J. Guérin dalle Mese, *Égypte. La memoire et le rêve. Itineraires d'un voyage, 1320-1601* (1991) and *Schama 1995*, 285 ff. for the specific example of father Felix Fabri who visited Egypt in 1483. The journey of the knight Arnold von Harf from Cologne, who at the end of the 15th century made a journey through various countries, mainly around the Mediterranean Sea is particulary interesting. The manuscript of his journal, with 47 illustrations, was first published in 1860 (*Die Pilgerfahrt des Ritters Arnold von Harff von Cöln durch Italien, Syrien, Aegypten, Arabien, Aethiopien, Nubien, Palästina, die Türkei, Frankreich und Spanien, wie er sie in den Jahren 1496-1499 vollendet, beschrieben und durch Zeichnungen erläutert hat. Nach den ältesten Handschriften und mit deren 47 Bildern in Holzschnitt herausgegeben von Dr. E. von Groote*). Amongst many other things Von Harf mentions the crocodiles in the Nile and tells how these often succeed in polishing off cattle or mules drinking at the water's edge: an Egypt topos which also frequently comes to the fore in the Nilotic scenes (cf. Ch. III 4.1.3).

[554] Cf. E. Hornung, *Zum Bild Ägyptens im Mittelalter und in der Renaissance* (1990), with different essays on the rare 14th, 15th, and 16th century journals.

1.3.1 *Egyptomania*

The special impression which aspects of Egyptian (material) culture made in Europe, becomes amongst other things clear from the copying of Egyptian elements by European artists and artisans. This phenomenon, usually denoted as Egyptomania, would only increase in popularity after Napoleon's expedition, but it already occurred on a large scale before the beginning of the 19th century[556]. As mentioned earlier, Egyptian sphinxes, preserved from Antiquity, were already copied and exhibited in courtyards of monasteries in Rome at the beginning of the 13th century[557]. During the Renaissance, this interest in remains of Egyptian (material) culture was part of a more philosophical interest in particular in Egyptian religion. There was an alchemistic and astrological image of Egypt, in which the country of the Nile was seen as the source of all wisdom and the hieroglyphs as holy symbols of it. The famous Athanasius Kircher, already mentioned earlier, is the pre-eminent exponent of this particular perception of Egypt[558]. From the 15th century onwards, Egyptian and egyptianising artefacts found in Rome are re-used and re-erected. In addition, Egyptian and egyptianising elements are used in contemporary art, as the so-called Borgia apartments of Alexander VI illustrate. At the beginning of the 16th century the so-called 'mensa isiaca' was found, an altar piece with depictions of Egyptian deities and ceremonies which was regarded as truly Egyptian but is in fact Roman-made[559]. Much discussion ensues on the interpretation of this object, by which the scientific interest for Egypt and the Egyptian culture is greatly stimulated in Europe. The application of Egyptian ornamentation in decoration also begins in this period. Raphael's stanzas in the Vatican, with painted Egyptian statues as ornament, inspired by statues found in the Villa Hadriana, testify to this. Especially in 18th century France, interest in Egypt is further increased by the publication, in Paris, of two important archaeological works in which Egyptian and egyptianising objects are extensively described and discussed: Bernhard Montfaucon's *L'antiquité expliquée et représentée en figures* (10 volumes were published in 1719, and a supplementary 5 volumes in 1724) and the series *Recueils d'antiquités égyptiennes, étrusques, et romaines*, published by the Comte Caylus from 1752 to 1776. Both publications have been important in the dissemination of knowledge about the remains of material culture from Antiquity, amongst them Aegyptiaca. De Montfaucon's evaluation of the Egyptian (material) culture is heterogeneous. He praised Egypt as the cradle of European civilisation, but regarded Egyptian art as underdeveloped compared to Graeco-Roman works of art. Caylus, one of the most important art and culture theoreticians of his time, was positive in all respects about the Egyptian culture. How great the influence of both publications was as a source of information concerning Egypt and Egyptian (material) culture is shown by the two most notable egyptianising monuments from the 18th century: the so-called Apis altar made by the court jeweller Johann Melchior Dinglinger from Dresden, and the interior paintings designed by Piranesi for the famous Caffè degli Inglesi in Rome. Dinglinger based himself for the many Egyptian (god)figures almost solely on de Montfaucon. In the now lost interior of Piranesi, the publication of Caylus is clearly visible as example, as is the collection of Aegyptiaca of the Vatican Museums[560]. In the 1780's, Egyptomania reached its first apex to develop further with new information from the Nile country itself after Napoleon's expedition and in particular after the publication of Vivant Denon's *Description de l'Égypte* in 1809 and the much less expensive, more manageable and much wider distributed 'édition Pancoucke' in 1821. A huge supply of Egyptian artefacts are brought to the Louvre in particular and Europe in general, which influences the ornamentation of neo-classicism, showing innumerable egyptianising motifs, for instance in the decoration of furniture. The famous egyptianising decoration of the house of Thomas Hope in London revealingly illustrates this phenomenon in general. Also in architecture, for instance, tombs in the shape of the typical Egyptian pyramid are popular throughout Europe in this period. The stereometry of Egyptian architecture fitted in well with the prevailing notions of style and there are a number of plans for huge monuments in an Egyptian style. In the 19th and 20th century, the Egyptian visual language is mainly imitated in architecture. Interest in the country is further expressed in the, mainly historical, paintings with Egyptian subjects which are popular in particular at the end of the 19th century and which are part of the imagination of the East in general[561]. In the Netherlands, Willem de Famars Testas is one of the rare representatives of this genre[562].

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[555] For the effect of this aspect on 20th century media such as films and comics cf. J. Quaegebeur (ed.), *Egypte hertekend. Het oude Egypte in de beeldverhalen* (1988) and *Images d'Egypte. De la fresque à la bande dessinée (Actes des journées d'études CEDEJ-IFAO)* (1991).

[556] Egyptomania as a cultural phenomenon has been extensively studied. A number of general outline publications, which usually have an extensive bibliography, are given here as reference as well as publications which are important in an interpretative respect: E. Iversen, *The myth of Egypt and its hieroglyphs in European tradition* (1961); J.S. Curl, *The Egyptian revival as a recurring theme in the history of taste* (1982); R. Wittkower, Egypt and Europe in: R. Reynolds (ed.), *Selected lectures of Richard Wittkower. The impact of non-European civilisations on the art of the West* (1989) 36-59; J.M. Humbert, *L'Egyptomanie dans l'art occidental* (1989); D. Syndram, *Ägypten-Faszination. Untersuchungen zum Ägyptenbild im europaïschen Klassizismus bis 1800* (1990); *Egyptomania. L'Égypte dans l'art européen 1730-1930* (exhibition catalogue Louvre) (1994), *Theatrum Hieroglyphicum. Ägyptisierende Bildwerke des Barock* (exhibition catalogue München) (1995) and *Syndram 1999*. See for different aspects A.M. Roth, Ancient Egypt in America. Claiming the riches, in: L. Meskell (ed.), *Archaeology under fire. Nationalism, politics and heritage in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East* (1998) 217-228.

[557] Cf. Ch. IV 2.1.1.

[558] Cf. Ch. IV 2.1.1.

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[559] Cf. *Iside*, 28-29 with all previous literature.

[560] For the Apis altar cf. *Syndram 1999*, with a debatable interpretation of the work of art as a symbol of revival, explainable from the mortal fear of Dinglinger who died shortly after the completion. For the interior of Piranesi, only partly preserved via two etchings of a long and a shorter wall of the room which Piranesi incorporated in a book published in 1769, cf. J. Wilton Elly, *Giovanni Battista Piranesi. The complete etchings* (1994) II, 886-887 and 947-948.

1.3.2 *Orientalism*

In Egyptomania, Pharaonic (material) culture is the main focus. There was of course, as briefly indicated in the introduction, also an interest in the contemporary country itself and its inhabitants. From the 19th century onwards, this imagining of Egypt becomes part of the European representation of the East, often referred to as Orientalism. This phenomenon is most encompassingly, as well as most suggestively presented by Said in his *Orientalism* from 1978. In his book, Said attempts to prove the existence of a European construction of the East as a conscious creation, as well as to show which damaging power emanated from this fiction and continues to emanate. It would concern a method of cataloguing the East which is directly connected with the European imperialistic world view. To what extent Said is right, is not important here[563]. In this respect especially the stereotypes are interesting with which the East and Easterners have mainly been associated in Europe and the West in the past centuries.

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[561] Cf. for examples *Peltre 1997.*

[562] Cf. *Willem de Famars Testas, Reisschetsen uit Egypte 1858-1860, naar ongepubliceerde handschriften bewerkt en geannoteerd door Maarten J. Raven* (1988).

[563] Said has been extensively followed and denounced. In the same vein as Said,

Unbridled sensuality can be mentioned first, in which the harem soon served as metaphor. For instance, in the generally praised scientific publication of Edward Lane *An account of the manners and customs of the modern Egyptians* from 1835, reprinted to the present day, we read:

> "in sensuality, as far as it relates to the indulgence of libidinous passions, the Egyptians, as well as other natives of hot climates, certainly exceed more northern nations"[564]

This image of the sexually overactive oriental stems perhaps also from the association with the ancient idea of a very rich East, as does the second stereotype of laziness: Orientals are seen as pleasure-seekers, who will never exert themselves. A third frequently occurring qualification is that of the oriental as excessively cruel. As desired one can quote from four centuries of books and representations on the East to illustrate these stereotypes, but in a 17th century description of an English traveller, who discovers in the gardens around the palace of the sultan in Istanbul a porphyry pond and has his own ideas about it, the three images mentioned converge neatly: the oriental as bored, sexually perverse despot:

> "Here he putteth in his Concubines stark naked and shooteth at them with certain pelletts that stick upon them without any damage to their bodies. And sometimes he lets the water in such abundance upon them .... that being above their heights they all bob up and down for life; and when his pleasure is satisfied with the sport, he lets down the water, and calls the Eunuchs who wait upon his women, to fetch them out if alive"[565].

Also the various world exhibitions show how Europe imagines the non-Western world and how, amongst other things, an image of Egypt is thus constructed. Mitchell illustrates this process in an interesting

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but sometimes with different examples, is amongst others *Kabbani 1986*, used here. Of the many criticisms I consider J. Clifford, On Orientalism, in: idem, *The predicament of culture* (1988); *Thomas 1994*, index sv. and *Starkey 1998*, esp. 233-243 the most valuable.

[564] Cf. *Mitchell 1988*, 106. See for a critical discussion of Lane and his work *Kabbani 1986*, 37-45.

[565] S.C. Lomas (ed.), *Sir George Courthope. Memoirs 1616-1685* (1907) 123. Cf. *Kabbani 1986*, 19.

way by investigating the reactions of the non-Western visitors to these world exhibitions[566]. An Egyptian delegation, for instance, travelling via Paris to an orientalist conference in Sweden, is unpleasantly struck by the Egyptian part of the exposition. They discover that the building, which based on the façade seems a mosque, is actually a coffee shop with dancing Egyptian girls inside and that the paint on the walls of the different buildings is stained to give the whole an authentic appearance. Mitchell illustrates how Europeans tried to adhere to the existing image of Egypt in a confrontation with reality, i.e. a trip to Egypt: reality had to adapt itself that way to the existing image. The travelogue of Egypt by Gérard de Nerval, for instance, is based more on a study of earlier journals than on his own observations; he spent more time working in the library than walking the streets of Cairo. In addition, the Egyptian goddess Isis played a fundamental role in the writer's religious perception, which would certainly have strengthened the imaginary character of his perception of Egypt[567]. One of the results of this continuous reiteration of earlier descriptions and opinions is that a uniform European image of Egypt is created in which the same topoi are shown time and again[568].
Also Flaubert's imaginary journey to the East began long before he arrived for the first time in Egypt in 1849. Upon arrival he wrote that the atmosphere was somewhat like a "rétrouvaille" and he remarked:

> "ça avait l'air d'un paysage peint, d'un immense décor de thêatre fait exprès pour nous"[569].

One believed oneself to be looking for the reality of Egyptian life, but only wanted to experience it as an exhibition: a strange paradox which is well illustrated by Nerval, who writes to Gautier on his journey through Egypt that real Oriental cafés are only to be found in Paris and sighs "je retrouvai à l'Opéra le Caire veritable"[570].

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[566] T. Mitchell, Orientalism and the exhibitionary order, in: *Dirks 1992*, 289-317.

[567] See for these aspects the books by Aubaude mentioned in Ch. I 2.2.

[568] Cf. for the same process with regard to Spain section 1.7.

[569] Cf. *Kabbani 1986*, 71-72 for references.

[570] See C. Aubaude, *Le voyage en Égypte de Gérard de Nerval* (1997) 52 for the quotation, also mentioned by *Mitchell 1988*, 29-30. *Mitchell 1988*, 22 interprets this paradox as follows: "They were confused of course, but perhaps the key to their confusion was this: although they thought of themselves as moving from the pictures to the real thing, they went on trying—like Flaubert—to grasp the real thing

1.4 *The French depiction of Africa at the end of the 19th century*

It is interesting to go a little further into this 19th century French view on the basis of a concrete example, from which it will be shown that Orientalism as cultural phenomenon and colonialism, which will be the focus of the following section, are related notions.

Corbey studied French depictions of Africa which in the shape of postcards were very popular at the end of the 19th century[571]. He concludes that these images are part of one European *text*, a European (male) discourse on an imagined (female) Africa. Time and again the same paradigmatic contrasts are formulated: civilised versus uncivilised, culture versus nature, etc. This European view on the (exotic) Other is also motivated by a sexually tinted interest; Corbey even speaks of a voyeurism. It was this imagination, this discourse that gave some of the European powers the ideological justification for the exploitation of large parts of the African territory. It seemed only logical that the female, weak Africa was to be dominated by the male, strong Europe.

1.5 *The cultures of colonial projects*

Colonialism has been the subject of much discussion, especially after the universal process of decolonisation in the second half of the 20th century. The emphasis is thereby often put on political and economic relations, which in many cases were legitimised by ideological concepts such as racism and progress. Colonialism can, however, also be investigated, as in some more recent anthropological studies, as a cultural process[572]. In that view, colonialism is partly

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as a picture. How could they do otherwise, since they took reality itself to be a picture?". To get an impression of the 19th and 20th century artists, writers and other people travelling Egypt and their accounts in general, I found *Egypt. A traveller's anthology* (compiled by C. Pick, 1991) and *Starkey 1998* to be most useful.

[571] R. Corbey, *Wildheid en beschaving. De Europese verbeelding van Afrika* (1989) on which this paragraph is based.

[572] *Dirks 1992*, 3: "(–) in certain important ways, culture was what colonialism was all about." See also *Thomas 1994*, 2: "Rather colonialism has always, equally importantly and deeply, been a cultural proces; its discoveries and trespasses are imagined and energized through signs, metaphors and narratives (–)". This section is mainly based on *Nederveen-Pieterse 1990*, chapter 5: Colonialism and popular culture, and *Thomas 1994*. Other archaeological literature used in which the themes dealt with are broached: J. Webster, N.J. Cooper, *Roman Imperialism: Post-Colonial Perspectives* (1996) in particular the article by D.J. Mattingly, From one colonialism to another: imperialism and the Maghreb, 49-69 and P. Van Dommelen, *On colonial grounds* (1998).

reflexive, as is travelling: the self, one's own world, is as much discovered or again defined as the unknown world. That way colonialism is a form of discourse on other cultures as well as on one's own society and it is in the framework of this chapter therefore of importance. It is however impossible to characterise 'the culture of colonialism', just as there is no uniform model for the discourse on the Other. Monolithic notions of colonialism (formerly: we are good and are helping the Other; now: we are bad and have exploited the Other) do wrong to the different forms in which the phenomenon has manifested itself:

> "(–) only localized theories and historically specific accounts can provide much insight into the varied articulations."

It therefore seems in fact that we can speak of 'colonialisms'[573]. Particularly in the publication by Thomas these insights are elaborated and various relevant observations and examples will therefore briefly be discussed here.

Firstly, colonialism should be seen as a very diverse, cultural process, in which neither the coloniser nor the colonised can be regarded as a uniform category[574]. Also colonisers, for instance, generally felt uncertainties in their attempt to get a grip on the cultures unknown to them and were, paradoxically, sometimes even the inferior party in their own perception. Therefore, a colonial discourse on the Other cannot be monolithic. Thomas discusses various examples of the British 19th century colonial discourse, amongst them a photograph of a 'cannibal ceremony' staged around 1895. What is notable there is firstly the anonymous, impersonal depiction of the indigenous population, in this case mainly Fijians. They are metaphors, stereotypes which express a certain quality, here belligerence and agressiveness, whereas in this case a different tribe has a more feminine, more developed appearance. On the one hand this picture testifies to the power and authority which the colonising Englishman could apparently exert; he was able to depict them as he wanted. On the other hand it should be borne in mind that the Fijian men also play an active part in this process and do not only submit to it. After other examples like this, Thomas therefore warns:

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[573] *Thomas 1994*, ix and 9, also for the quotation.

[574] See also *Fabian 1983*, 119: not only "the crooks and brutal exploiters, but the honest and intelligent agents of colonialism need to be accounted for".

> "But if colonial discourse is described through the psychic dynamics of self-other relations, or in a logic of camouflage or mimicry, it cannot be accorded to this historic peculiarity."

Also the discourse on the Other itself is therefore not a coherent project but "(–) a fractured one, riddled with contradictions (–)"[575]. On the basis of Bourdieu's *Outline of a theory of practice*, Thomas next attempts to develop an alternative approach which meets the objections formulated.

In this, also the various European ways of dealing with the Other, discussed in section 1.2, are involved. What strikes Thomas most is the omnipresent, strong and convincing racism of the 19th century. This probably also stemmed from the notion that external features of people say something about their character: there was something like a 'language of physical anthropology'[576]. This idea is clearly observable as a modifying principle in some depictions of the Other from that period. Thomas discusses e.g. the representations of a Javan and a Papuan in the work of Raffles. The Javan has a noble, almost western, appearance and is also characterised as civilised by the added attributes, whereas the Papuan is depicted as a kind of apeman[577]. The portrayal of the Other, whichever way characterised, is on its own already an action testifying of (imaginary) power, Thomas argues. The reduction of cultures, people and geographical areas to pictures usually does give the observer a peculiar feeling of control and superiority[578].

Subsequently Thomas argues in favour of using the term 'colonial projects' to emphasise the complex and ambiguous character of the whole process, of which the discourse on the Other is thus part. In order to emphasise this ambiguity, he discusses the functioning of the British authority on Fiji, where racist paternalism and altruistic interest and concern in respect of the indigenous population occurred alongside each other[579]. It should be noted however that certain groups usually had a specific attitude. For instance among the missionaries, who denounced the white planters, there was often at the same time an infantilisation of the indigenous population. The construction of the Other as immature and childish also occurs more generally and fits in with 19th century evolutionary thought. The concluding chapter of Thomas' book discusses a number of forms of colonialism in the present, in which in particular what Thomas calls 'cultural colonialism' comes to the fore. As a result of a critical review of the New Age interest in Aboriginal art and the film *Dances with Wolves*, Thomas speaks of "primitivist idealizations: constructions of the exotic and primitive that are superficially sympathetic or progressive but in many ways resonant of traditional evocations of others"[580]. What was formerly uncritically judged negatively is now uncritically judged positively and thus a kind of positive self-definition seems to have been created.

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[575] *Thomas 1994*, 49 and 50 for the quotations.

[576] *Thomas 1994*, 89. In the preceding pages he quotes as illustration a number of journals in which an enumeration of physical characteristics leads to a character sketch.

[577] *Thomas 1994*, 87-89 and 231-233.

[578] *Thomas 1994*, 111-112.

[579] *Thomas 1994*, 107 ff.

Again it seems important, against the background of these general insights in respect of colonialism and culture, to look specifically at the relation between Europe and Egypt.

1.6 *The European colonisation of Egypt*

In 1798 Napoleon landed near Alexandria with the intention to conquer Egypt and to thus deprive the English of their sea and land routes to India. After an occupation of three years, the French were defeated in 1801 by English and Ottoman troops and Egypt came largely in the English sphere of influence. The Suez canal was dug in the 1860's, after which the economic importance of Egypt only increased for Europe.

A postmodernist tinted interpretation of the European colonial attitude towards Egypt is given by Mitchell in his *Colonising Egypt*. He attempts, whilst in theoretical respects leaning heavily on Foucault, Heidegger and Derrida:

> "to explore (–) the peculiar methods of order and truth that characterise the modern West (–) through a re-reading of Europe's colonial impact on nineteenth-century Egypt"[581].

The core of his interpretation is formed by the notion 'representation': Mitchell contends that colonising Europe saw the world in fact as a kind of exhibition; a well-ordered entity with European superiority as the base, in which the cultural and colonial (power) relations were fixed. The majority of the colonial activities, from the building of new settlements to the introduction of new communication methods, could only be really understood seen against this background; they would all be, to a greater or lesser extent, "symbolic representations of the world's cultural and colonial order"[582]. The way in which this happens Mitchell calls 'enframing': via a number of well-structured and organised mechanisms colonial powers developed an attempt to shape the European view of Egypt actually in the country itself. The sterotypes about the Orient and Egypt, which were already raised in section 1.3 of this chapter, are thereby used as justification, as well as further accentuated. As example can serve the 'indolence' identified everywhere by the Europeans, which would pervade all areas of Egyptian life and by which, in European eyes, Egypt was as it were asking for colonial order and structure[583]. The concluding chapter of Mitchell's book begins with an example showing that material culture is also pervaded with such underlying mechanisms:

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[580] *Thomas 1994*, 170-171.

[581] *Mitchell 1988*, ix.

> "Marshal Lyautey was the colonial governor of French-occupied Morocco during the early part of the 20th century. Near the end of his period in power, on the occasion of the opening of the Casablanca-Rabat Standard Gauge Railway, Lyautey led a group of French engineers and journalists on a tour of Rabat, the newly built colonial capital. The writer André Maurois was among the guests and he recorded the Marshal's words (–): 'I shall explain to you the philosophy of the thing', Lyautey began, as they got off the train at Rabat and entered the new capital. 'The buildings as a whole form a fan. At the centre of the fan, in the mounting—those are the Administration. Beyond them, where it broadens out, are the Government Ministries placed in logical order. You understand? For example, here, Public Works. Next to it: Roads and Bridges, and then Mines. Next to Agriculture, Forests. This, here, is the gap for Finance. The building has not yet been built, but it will be intercalated in its logical place.' One of the guests interrupts with a question: 'Monsieur le Maréchal', he asks, 'what is this kiosk for?' To which Lyautey replies: 'That? That is for the sale of maps"[584].

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[582] *Mitchell 1988*, 7; cf. his entire first chapter ("Egypt at the exhibition") for a more extensive summary and illustration of the set-up of his study.

[583] Cf. for this in particular *Mitchell 1988*, Ch. 4. *Nederveen-Pieterse 1990*, chapter 5 sees the same principle applied in the European attitude to/colonisation of Africa: by the application of an image-rhetoric of savagery (naked, primitive, black) versus civilisation (dressed, composed, white), colonisation is legitimised; one thus stresses human sacrifices made by the Africans, their fetishism, etc.

[584] A. Maurois, *Lyautey* (1931) 319-320. Cf. *Mitchell 1988*, 161 ff.

In a more general sense, the restructuring of Paris by Haussmann can be put forward as an example. The present network of streets in Paris with the countless boulevards has its origin, amongst other things, in a deep-seated need of an overall view, order and structure for which one was prepared to demolish most of the medieval town[585].

Language would also represent in such a way; certainly where it concerns language in the colonial situation. The European reports on colonial reality are therefore partly propaganda, the contents and structure of which can be understood against the background of the underlying mechanisms mentioned. Although it was observed with reason in the previous section that colonialism cannot be seen as a monolithic phenomenon with a specified and well-considered aim, the mapping of more general motifs, motives and mechanisms is however important in the interpretation of colonial material culture in the colonies, as aptly illustrated by the example of Lyautey, or—important for this chapter—of the colonial representation, in words or pictures, of the colonies. For instance, in the European representation of American Indians after the journeys of Columbus, the background of these journeys—the acquisition of wealth—played an important role; just as some European depictions of Africa can only be understood against the background of the idea of the Christian mission[586].

In the European imagination of Egypt also an economic background will undoubtedly have played a role. The English soon succeeded in transforming Egypt, in economic respect, into a large-scale producer of cotton. In the first decades of the 20th century, cotton amounted to 92% of Egypt's total export: "no other place in the world in the 19th century was transformed on a greater scale to serve the production of a single industry", according to Mitchell[587].

1.7 *Persisting myths*

How the representation of a different culture in words or pictures can be understood by studying underlying mechanisms, as well as what such a representation can look like and how it can function, will be concretised on the basis of the investigation of the myth of romantic Spain, as it took shape in the European, and in particular in the English, world. I base myself thereby on a 'deconstructive', not undisputed book which the Italian cultural-historican Praz wrote on Spain in 1926[588]. The book has the character of a settling of accounts: for Praz Spain is a second-rate Italy, a country where culture has sustained incalculable damage by centuries of Arabian rule and where death is one of the many unhealthy obsessions. Praz also challenges the many clichés, both touristic and literary ones, which determine the image of Spain in the rest of Europe, and in his deconstruction of these clichés lies the value of the book for this chapter.

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[585] Cf. *Mitchell 1988*, 59-60 who also considers this as an example of 'enframing'. A direct reason for the restructering was the desire to be able to efficiently counter revolts.

[586] Cf. for the first example section 1.3 and the literature mentioned there, for the second example *Nederveen-Pieterse 1990*, 68 ff.

[587] *Mitchell 1988*, 16.

The stereotypical image of Spain, created by French and German romanticists and perfected by the earlier mentioned Théophile Gautier, can be summarised with the terms charm/colourfulness/romance on the one hand, and blood/lust/death on the other. That this mystification has come to form the pre-eminent image of Spain is the result of the popularity of the literary texts through which this image was disseminated and of the upcoming tourism at the end of the 19th century. It was of great importance to the English company Cook to make Spain attractive for the general public through what could be called a positive self-definition: everything that England did not have, would be abundantly present in Spain. Spain is, according to Praz, amongst other things the terminal of the intellectual obsessed with sexuality, and the observation that lust is one of Spain's essential features therefore says more about the intellectuals than about Spain itself. The book shows not only that literary texts can play an important role in the creation of an image of a country, but also how persistent such an image can be, as it apparently provides in a need. Many literary texts on, and depictions of, Spain are therefore in fact re-productions of a cliché image, a formula, of which the reasons of creation should be sought in the context of origin.

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[588] The last, revised, edition of the work is used here: *Praz 1955*. See in general *Said 1978* for the persisting character of a once developed image.

1.8 *Modern America in European eyes: a look into the future?*

Facets of the European acquaintance with and colonisation of the exotic Other have been dealt with in the preceding sections, as a framework for a better understanding of the Roman attitude toward Egypt. One aspect that has not been dealt with yet, is the Roman perception of Egypt as a powerful and wealthy superpower in the Hellenistic world; a view in which perhaps primarily a more positive attitude will dominate, contrary to the so far described sentiments which mainly start from one's own superiority. Aspects of the European imagination of modern America seem therefore useful as a parallel[589].

Van Berkel distinguishes two main motives in his overview of the role which America has played in the conceptual universe of the European intellectual: primitivism and futurism[590]. Primitivism is founded on the notion that culture creates needs and therefore makes us unhappy; 'the noble savage' would be better off. The motive of futurism is defined as the conviction that what can be observed in America, will also happen in Europe: America, the colonist, as the country of the future, as the counterpart of the overcivilised Europe where one is hampered by rigid social relations. This theme of America, as the country where the future has already begun, is however mainly interpreted negatively by many European culture critics: the advance of materialism, industrialisation and the so-called modern form of culture and civilisation is seen as a threat to one's own culture. These fending-off reactions are sometimes characterised as 'the Athenian complex': like the conquered Greeks who regarded themselves as culturally superior to their Roman conquerer, the European intellectuals would attempt to compensate for the political power lost after World War I by claiming a culturally superior position[591].

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[589] Cf. for this *Van Berkel 1990*, on which this section is mainly based, and the books by H. Honour, *The new golden land. European images of America from the discoveries to the present time* (1975) and idem, *The European vision of America* (1975).

[590] K. Van Berkel, Amerika als spiegel van de Europese cultuurgeschiedenis, in: *Van Berkel 1990*, 9-28.

[591] The expression 'Athenian complex' is from the americanist Den Hollander, cf. the contribution of A. Lammers in *Van Berkel 1990*, 181-192. A difference between the two situations seems to be however that in Antiquity it were the Romans who acknowledged the Greek cultural superiority and not so much the Greeks who claimed it, as far as can be reconstructed on the basis of literary source material.

The European, intellectual, attitude toward America seems therefore characterised by a certain dualism. Sometimes in themselves positive aspects seem thereby to be perceived as negative as they affect one's own superior position.

1.9 *Conclusion*

At the beginning of this chapter the notion discourse has been introduced as a system of meaningful acting with a narrative structure. Examples of this narrative structure have so far been extensively discussed: 19th century European stereotypes about the Orient, colonialistic architecture, the English image of Spain, etc. The somewhat vague term of 'underlying mechanisms' which was used, indicates a system of (meaningful) actions to which the narratives mentioned refer. The underlying system from which the (meaningful) actions can be explained must therefore form the basis for the interpretation of the narratives. This sounds more difficult than it is. The social context, the *Leitmotive* which are visible there, must form the basis for the interpretation of narratives which arise from it.

In the above eight sections a diverse number of narratives has been discussed and it has been been attempted to connect these with the underlying system, the social context in which they are rooted. Light has also been shed on the functioning of such narrative structures and their background. The examples have been chosen in such a way that in many cases parallels can be drawn with the Roman situation and the relation Rome-Egypt. They do not pretend to be more or less than that. It is, for example, not the intention of this chapter to interpret the Roman imagination of Egypt as Orientalism; a fundamental analysis investigating whether a number of very important economic, political and social preconditions are equal, is after all lacking. Even if such an analysis would permit a comparison, it is questionable whether it really is worthwhile to compare two such different historical periods[592]. Parallels from different historical periods or cultures can however in a more general sense provide insight; they can suggest a till then unknown angle to the researcher, which is perhaps also important in the study of the (archaeological) material in question. To what extent the mechanisms described above are also applicable to the Roman discourse on Egypt will be discussed at the end of this chapter. Before such a discussion can really be useful, it will first be necessary to investigate the underlying system, the social context with these issues in mind: how was the attitude of the Roman toward the Other in a general sense? Which important *Leitmotive* can be distiguished there?

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[592] See however *Alston 1996*, 107 who concludes "(–) that the mentality of Roman cultural imperialism differed fundamentally from European imperialism (–)". The remainder of this chapter will show that such an absolute conclusion can be doubted.

2 *Rome and the Other: general aspects*

Momigliano has stated with reason that the success of Roman imperialism is partly due to the Roman skill in absorbing other cultures and languages, in particular the Greek[593]. The Greeks were indeed excellent ethnographers but their factual interest in other cultures seems to have been rather small, at least in the Hellenistic period. In the Greek colony of Massalia, the present Marseille, for instance, for centuries no profound interest was shown in the Celts who lived around the city, except for astonishment at some exotic details such as the druids, until Greek ethnographers in Roman service, such as Polybius, began to describe systematically the customs of the Celts[594]. Although in the first instance ethnography was thus not typical for Roman authors, the Romans did show, with whatever purpose, a more fundamental interest in other cultures. Aspects of that interest, as well as the actual dealing with the many foreigners and foreign cultures with which the Romans were confronted, will be discussed in this section. A discussion of Tacitus' *Germania* forms for various reasons a good overture.

2.1 *Romans and Germans: Tacitus' Germania*

The *Germania*, written in AD 98, was in the 19th century regarded as the Roman ethnography par excellence and hence it was assumed that the treatise offered a reasonably faithful description of the *Germani*, an ethnic entity named by the Romans[595]. At the beginning of the

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[593] *Momigliano 1975*, 21.

[594] *Momigliano 1975*, 59-66. Cf. for an introduction to and an overview of antique ethnography in general *Müller 1972*, *1980*. A still useful general introduction to the classical attitude towards the Other is: T.J. Haarhoff, *The stranger at the gate. Aspects of exclusiveness and co-operation in ancient Greece and Rome, with some reference to modern times* (1948). With regard to the Roman situation specifically the first chapter of *Dauge 1981* is useful.

[595] The Romans meant by the indication *Germani* a conglomeration of barbaric

20th century, however, one became aware of the fact that the treatise showed great similarities with Greek and Roman predecessors and therefore was heavily embedded in the Roman world view. These observations were only recently taken seriously enough and have led to an image of Tacitus as a literator instead of an ethnographer. In a structuralistic tinted analysis of the work, Bazelmans interprets the *Germania* therefore as follows:

> "geen willekeurige encyclopedische opsomming van wetenswaardigheden (–), maar een zorgvuldig gecomponeerd literair werk van een externe beschouwer, die een antwoord probeert te geven op een aantal cultuurfilosofische vragen die betrekking hebben op het, in de klassieke literatuur veel bediscussieerde, contrast tussen Romeinen en barbaren."[596].

In compiling the *Germania* Tacitus had much source material at his disposal in Rome: there were various scientific sources, for instance, but also Germans living in the city. First of all Tacitus made a selection of all this material. Such a selection process always takes place on the basis of a preconceived image with the result that this discourse on the German Other is based on a Roman point of departure. The *Germania* is a very well-organised book with, as its most prominent theme, the valiant Germanic character. In order to preserve the structure and cohesion of the work, Tacitus will have had to group his material around this theme: again a form of selection. In relation to the Germanic valour, Tacitus reaches a paradoxical conclusion for him: the Germans are both lazy and incapable, and warlike; two notions which are difficult to reconcile for the Romans. Although Tacitus operates clearly within the ethnographic tradition, it is not a case of the *Germania* only repeating clichés on barbarians; Tacitus also prompts original views and statements. Bazelmans supposes that the *Germania* can be better understood on the basis of

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tribes in North and Central Europe, which were thus distinguished from the Celts and the Gauls. However, these tribes did not consider themselves in the least as one unit and also the term *Germani* was primarily unknown to them.

[596] See J. Bazelmans, *Één voor allen, allen voor één. Tacitus' Germania, de Oudengelse Beowulf en het ritueel-kosmologisch karakter van de relatie tussen heer en krijger-volgeling in Germaanse samenlevingen* (diss. UvA 1996) 19 ff, on which this section is mainly based. An earlier, English version of the part on Tacitus was published in N. Roymans, F. Theeuws (eds.), *Images of the past. Studies on ancient societies in Northwestern Europe* (1991) 91-130. Cf. also A. Lund, *Zur Gesamtinterpretation der 'Germania' des Tacitus* (1991); F. Egmond, P. Mason, *The mammoth and the mouse. Microhistory and morphology* (1997) 160-168 ("Tacitus and the forty-five tribes of Germany") and, more in general, D. Timpe, Rom und die Barbaren des Nordens, in: *Schuster 1996*, 34-50.

paradigmatic oppositions in the Roman discourse on barbarians. Tacitus also gains insight into an unknown reality by comparing and contrasting this reality with Roman values, customs and institutions. Germans are like animals, whereas the Romans are the people and the real animals form the other side of the spectrum. From this stems the difference between a rational and civilised course of action, and a simple course of action following primary urges (*disciplina* versus *simplicitas* and *ratio* versus *inertia*). In this vein, Tacitus regards Germanic society as free, as opposed to the organised Roman Empire. Here the twin Roman concepts *licentia* and *discordia* fit as far as the Germans are concerned, as opposed to *firmitas* and *constantia.* It is notable that this 'freedom' is not explained purely negative by Tacitus and connected with lawlessness and chaos, but also described positively. This can probably be explained by Tacitus' negative view of the Principate. Also in the evaluation of the Other Tacitus' own culture critical view plays a role: his negative tone on Germanic kingship probably stems from the same disapproval of the Roman Principate. To a certain extent, a differentiated view on his own society is used in the *Germania*: the Germans were both idealised and used as a negative contrast.

Apart from the paradigmatic level in Tacitus' discourse on the Germans, i.e. the abstract opposites in which the relation Romans versus barbarians is sketched, Bazelmans also sees in the *Germania* a syntagmatic aspect, concerning the larger narrative as it takes place in time. This is the idea that the Pax Romana was the final piece of the evolutionary history of civilisation. Perhaps the *Germania* should therefore also be seen as a Roman illustration of the notion 'Daar werd wat groots verricht'[597].

2.2 *Romans and Greeks*

In an investigation of Roman views of other nations and cultures, the relation Romans versus Greeks often strongly attracts the attention[598]. Fascination within the research tradition for the so succinctly formulated opposite by Horace ("Conquered Greece has conquered the barbarian conquerer and brought art to peasant Latium") undoubtedly played a role here as well[599]. Some short remarks should suffice here.

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[597] "Something important was achieved over there". Dutch expression that was frequently used in the first half of the 20th century to describe the Dutch colonial project in the East Indies.

[598] Most useful are: N.K. Petrokseilou, *Roman attitudes to the Greeks* (1974); *Balsdon 1979*, 30-54; *Dauge 1981*, index sv. Grecs; G. Vogt-Spira, Die Kulturbegegnung Roms mit den Griechen, in *Schuster 1996*, 11-33 and the studies of E.S. Gruen. For the Greek opinion on Rome and Romans cf. B. Forte, *Rome and the Romans as the Greeks saw them* (1972).

Greeks were credited, if the literary sources can be regarded as representative, with a large number of qualities which were negative in Roman eyes, amongst which: *volubilitas* (the ability to speak very fast), *ineptia* (pendantry), *impudentia* (shamelessness) and *levitas* (frivolity). It is not surprising that these are all opposites in respect of the idealised image of the Roman: a soberly living, hard working, pious peasant and soldier. Generalising it can be stated that the various differences are usually traced back to the opposition practical versus theoretical: the Romans as conquerers and organisers; the Greeks as fast talkers and superior thinkers. The positive merits of the Greeks in the cultural and intellectual sphere were for that matter quite evident. These were not repudiated but, as a whole, were less highly valued than Roman merits. In the second century BC, when Greeks and Greek culture enter the whole Italian peninsula on a large scale, the different kinds of reactions are visible in their most extreme form: on the one hand Greek influence is seen as undermining and Greek philosophers and orators are thrown out of the country; on the other hand part of the upper classes eagerly adopts so many aspects of Greek culture that we can speak of Hellenomania. In the first century BC these extremes converged so much that the ideal Roman young man was deemed to combine traditional Roman values with Greek cultural refinement. In the social upper classes this appreciation of Greek culture remains during imperial times, for instance nearly all emperors seem to have spoken Greek. A too strongly embracing of Greek culture, as Nero and Domitian showed, was not appreciated; the term *Graeculus* did not have a positive connotation. More general however, where the appreciation would have been more determined by contact with the Greeks themselves than with expressions of their culture, the stereotypes mentioned remain audible: Greeks are unreliable, only after luxury and (improper) sex lusting Orientals who ruin Roman society, to use the blown-up image of the satirist Juvenal. In order to explain the convergence of positive and negative associations, three mechanisms were used[600]: 1. Greeks were seen as a compound of good and bad qualities, as described above, 2. a sharp distinction was made between *Graecia vetus*, classical Greece which was admired in many respects, and contemporary Greece, where nothing of the fame of the ancestors had been preserved, and 3. a distinction was made between good Greeks and bad Greeks, whereby the good Greeks showed Roman virtues and the bad Greeks were mainly associated with Asia Minor.

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[599] Horace, Epistulae II, 1, 156-157. See S.E. Alcock, *Graecia capta. The landscapes of Roman Greece* (1993) esp. 1-3.

[600] *Balsdon 1979*, 38: "There were three ways out of the dilemma."

2.3 *Romans and Blacks*

An investigation into aspects of the Roman conceptualisations of *Germani* and Greeks, as presented in the two preceding sections, perhaps permits general conclusions applicable to the Roman image of Egypt; with the examination of the Roman attitude toward people with a dark skin, these conclusions become more specific. Snowden was the first to systematically collect a large number of Roman texts on and depictions of Blacks and on the basis of an investigation of this latter category he draws the conclusion that, from the Alexandrian period onwards, the Roman depictions of black people can be divided into three categories: 1. the real negro, where all typical physical characteristics are visible in their most prominent form, 2. a type with less prominent characteristics "explicable perhaps as resembling either the Nilotic negro or a negroid type with Caucasoid admixture" and 3. pygmies[601]. Because pygmies were mainly associated with the country of the Nile for understandable reasons, and because the Aethiopians living south of Egypt are most frequently occurring as Blacks in the literary and visual sources, it can be concluded that negroid people were often connected with Egypt by the Romans. The Roman image of Blacks is therefore directly of importance in the examination of the Roman image of Egypt.

The question of what Romans thought of minority groups such as Blacks has already received much attention for a long time. In the most recent monograph on this subject, the author rightly warns that this seems to follow more from the problem itself and the interest of the research tradition for it than from the very fragmentary data[602]. In the discussion of this question, the emphasis was often put on the concept of race and related concepts such as discrimination, etc.; there has been a very fierce debate on the question whether Romans were racist or not[603]. A first important question is therefore what kind of concept of race the Romans had exactly. Usually a European/American definition of the concept is assumed for the Romans, but this seems incorrect. The Roman worldview was fundamentally different: it knew white Northerners as underdeveloped barbarians and coloured Orientals as overdeveloped barbarians. Whites therefore did not exist as one's own, superior category. It is therefore debatable whether in this completely different social-psychological context Blacks existed as a coherent group, such as in Western societies and the European worldview.

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[601] *Snowden 1970*, 28-29. This book is still useful as a collection of the (archaeological) material; from an interpretative viewpoint *Thompson 1989* seems to provide more insight into the matter.

Examination of Romans texts on and depictions of Blacks makes it clear that these show in general a negative value judgement. Two aspects come mainly to the fore: Blacks usually belonged to the lower social classes and are in that capacity viewed negatively, in addition Blacks had in general a different physiognomy, something which was regarded as very notable by the Romans and for that reason negatively viewed. Blacks therefore seem not to have occupied a special position because of the colour of their skin but on the basis of different reasons.

This is confirmed by an examination of the Roman concept of the *Aethiops*. In Roman society this term is used in four different ways: 1. to indicate people at the other end of the world who had become black from too much sun, 2. to indicate the African people south of the Sahara, 3. as specific designation of inhabitants of Meroë/Kusch, or 4. as indication of a man or woman with a number of specific physical characteristics: a black or dark skin colour, a broad and flat nose, curly hair and swollen lips. The different meanings therefore intermingle and both the indication *Aethiops* and *Aethiopia* are incorrectly used by Roman authors. It is important to realise that the *Aethiops* are mainly distinguished from other non-white people on the basis of somatic characteristics; a black skin only is not enough. This is well illustrated by a fragment of Petronius' *Satyricon*; one of the texts that best illustrates the Roman ideas on race and corresponding characteristics[604]. In the classification and evaluation of other people, somatic characteristics therefore seem to play the most important role. Colour is of course an important part of this. Descent seems to play a much less important role. Hence there is no (sociological) reason to speak of racism in the Roman context: Romans did not think in the ideological concept of races.

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[602] *Thompson 1989*, 5.

[603] Cf., for instance, A.N. Sherwin-White, *Racial prejudice in imperial Rome* (1967).

[604] Paragraph 102, here cited after the edition of K. Mueller, *Petronii Arbitri.*

The Roman attitude in respect of other people can be called ethnocentric though[605]. In the Roman view, the North (cold) and the South (hot) formed the extremes of the world, which were inhabitated by people whose qualities were also determined by these extremes. The Romans, who lived in the ideal centre of the world, were therefore superior to them: the Northerners as regards intellectual capacities, the Southerners as regards physical power[606]. Both the inhabitants of the North/West (Europe) and the South/East (Asia) were thus seen as barbarians, albeit in an opposite way[607]. The topos of a very rich East, fashionable during European Orientalism, made itself felt also in the Roman period. Virgil, for instance, often brings up the many wonders and luxury of the East, yet it remains for him an artificial Eldorado, and there is no doubt that Italy is the real Garden of Eden[608]. People from the hotter areas of the East, the Greeks first, were therefore regarded as feminine, weak warriors and soldiers, whereas their intellectual capacities were recognised. This in itself positive aspect was however judged in general as decadent and

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Satyricon reliquiae (1995): "adhuc aliquod iter salutis quaerendum est. inspicite quod ego inveni. Eumolpus tamquam litterarum studiosus utique atramentum habet. hoc ergo remedio mutemus colores a capillis usque ad ungues. ita tamquam servi Aethiopes et praesto tibi erimus sine tormentorum iniuria hilares et permutato colore imponemus inimicis."quidni ?' inquit Giton 'etiam circumcide nos, ut Iudaei videamur, et pertunde aures, ut imitemur Arabes, et increta facies, ut suos Gallia cives putet : tamquam hic solus color figuram possit pervertere et non multa una oporteat consentiant, ut omni ratione mendacium constet. puta infectam medicamine faciem diutius durare posse; finge nec aquae asperginem impposituram aliquam corpori maculam nec vestem atramento adhaesuram, quod frequenter etiam non arcessito ferrumine infigitur : age, numquid et labra possumus tumore taeterrimo implere ? numquid et crines calamistro convertere ? numquid et frontes cicatricibus scindere ? numquid et crura in orbem pandere ? numquid et talos ad terram deducere ? numquid <et> barbam peregrina ratione figurare? Color arte compositus inquinat corpus, non mutat".

[605] This seems in fact to apply in Antiquity to all (ethnic) groups in their positioning in relation to other peoples, cf. *Müller 1972*, 12-13, who speaks of a "(–) eng-ethnozentrische Selbstüberhebung und Verabsolutierung der eigenen Daseinsordnung (–) die gesamte Antike hindurch".

[606] *Balsdon 1979*, 60.

[607] *André/Baslez 1993*, 142.

[608] Cf. for this, summarising, *André/Baslez 1993*, 143-145.

corrupt. Also in this respect the Romans were in the ideal centre between barbarian and over-civilised. The negative attitude toward Blacks should be seen against this background and can further be explained especially by the fact that the majority of the Blacks had indeed a very low status in Roman daily life, as slave or entertainer, as well as by the typical somatic characteristics of the *Aethiops*. Only in Christianity did the colour black acquire in itself a negative charge, as the colour of sin, darkness, devils and demons[609].

Notably, the social position occupied by Blacks in Roman society is more or less the same as Blacks filled in the Western world during the 19th and 20th century. The characteristic roles of Blacks on the margin of western societies were further developed in that period: Blacks as servants, e.g. the little Moorish slave, and Blacks as entertainers in, e.g., show business and sport[610].

2.4 *Foreigners in Rome*

> "*quae nunc diuitibus gens acceptissima nostris*
> *et quos praecipue fugiam, properabo fateri,*
> *nec pudor obstabit. non possum ferre, Quirites,*
> *Graecam Urbem. quamuis quota portio faecis Achaei ?*
> *iam pridem Syrus in Tiberim defluxit Orontes*
> *et linguam et mores et cum tibicine chordas*
> *obliquas nec non gentilia tympana secum*
> *uexit et ad circum iussas prostare puellas.*
> *ite, quibus grata est picta lupa Barbara mitra.*"[611]

From previous sections it has become clear how the Romans evaluated other cultures in a general sense. In this closing section, attention will briefly be given to the concrete presence of foreigners, and in particular Orientals, in Rome. As the well-known quotation of Juvenal suggests, this after all played an important role in the imagination[612].

Especially in the first century BC, large numbers of foreigners came to Rome as slaves and prisoners of war. Both during the Republican period and in imperial times, Greeks and other Orientals seem to have constituted the largest part of this slave population in Rome. There were of course also people of higher standing from the same areas, but their number is relatively small compared to the slave population. It is notable that the western provinces of the Imperium contributed to a relatively modest extent to this forming of a large social underclass, whereas their contribution to the aristocracy is relatively large. The opposite seems to be true of the eastern provinces; only in the third century AD for instance, did people from the eastern parts of the Empire take a seat in the Senate. Also because of the continuous increase in the number of foreigners and the fact that they were allowed to practice their religions and rituals, the oriental element was strongly present in Rome and in the Roman street scene during imperial times. Juvenal's third satire is illuminating in that respect also without the satirical distortion.

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[609] Cf. *Nederveen-Pieterse 1990*, Ch. I.

[610] Cf. extensively *Nederveen-Pieterse 1990*, with further references.

[611] Juvenal, *Satire* III, 58-66, cited after the edition of S.M. Braund, *Juvenal, Saturae Liber 1* (1996).

[612] See now in general D. Noy, *Foreigners at Rome. Citizens and strangers* (2000).

Little is known with certainty about the Egyptian presence specifically. Interesting is the story, among others told by Diodorus, of the Egyptian pharaoh Ptolemy VI who, deposed by his brother, flees to Rome and is given accommodation by the Alexandrian painter Demetrios who lives there. Ptolemy stays in the modest house of the apparently not wealthy Demetrios until the Senate, notified of his presence, finds a more suitable accomodation for him[613]. Cleopatra lived, with her retinue, for some considerable time in a villa *trans Tiberim* and received the Roman aristocracy there[614]. More of these conspicuous Egyptians in Rome are known from historical sources[615]. Epigraphical source material can provide an insight into the less special examples. Thanks to a recent inventory concerning imperial times, the presence of 43 Egyptians in Rome can be demonstrated[616]. It seems mainly to concern Alexandrians, as in the whole of Italy. The group consists of 18 soldiers and 25 ordinary citizens, the status of whom is not always clear[617]. Lafaye has suggested that many Egyptians lived in the area around the Campus Martius, thereby basing himself on the presence of the Iseum Campense[618]. Apart from the fact that in a general sense the assumption is not illogical that foreigners will establish themselves near a proper cult place, there are no other indications for this.

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[613] Diodorus 31, 18. Cf. *Meyboom 1995*, 164 (with n. 5). Also Ptolemy VII could be mentioned here. During the 'Egyptian affair' (see section 3.1.1) he was accommodated in Pompey's villa in the Alban mountains.

[614] Cf. Ch. I 1.4.

[615] Chaeremon of Alexandria, director of the famous library and later tutor of Nero (see P.W. van der Horst, *Chaeremon. Egyptian priest and stoic philosopher* (1984)), and the Alexandrian Claudius Claudianus, writer and protégé of Honorius, are probably the best known among them. Cf. *La Piana 1927*, 304 and *Ricci 1993*, 71-79 for more examples.

[616] *Ricci 1993*. See now also A. Cristofori, L'individuazione di Egiziani ed Alessandrini nella documentazione epigrafica dell'Italia romana, in: *Roma e l'Egitto* III, 79-94.

3 *The Roman image of Egypt*

Before sketching in this section the Roman image of Egypt as it appears in the various sources, it is first useful, as introduction, to pay attention briefly to two aspects.

First the Greek image of Egypt. Greek cultural and intellectual traditions after all often play a large role in the Roman world and the Greek image of Egypt can therefore have been important in the development of the Roman image of Egypt. The literature on this Greek image of Egypt is fairly extensive, in which amongst other things all statements of Greek authors on Egypt and Egyptians have been collected. Summarising one might say that the Greek image of the country in literary texts is fairly positive. Of course there is amazement about some uncommon practises, but Egypt is at the same time hailed as the cradle of philosophy and civilisation. In the second century BC the historian Polybius sketched an ethnic profile of Alexandria after having visited the city. As Diodorus and Strabo, who visited Egypt extensively, after him, his appraisel of Egyptians was favorable. These authors write about the orderly government, excellent customs, diligent administration and the intelligent cultivation of the Nile[619].

Secondly, some concrete details should be mentioned on the accessibility of Egypt and on Roman visits to the country of the Nile.

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[617] Cf. *Ricci 1993*, 84-91 for a detailed analysis.

[618] *Lafaye 1884*, 225, followed by *La Piana 1927*, 216-217.

[619] Cf. primarily C. Froidefond, *Le mirage égyptien dans la littérature grecque d'Homère à Aristote* (1971). Furthermore: *Smelik/Hemelrijk 1984*, 1869-1884; Neilos. Eine Anmerkung zur kulturellen Begegnung der Griechen mit den Ägyptern, in: *The intellectual heritage of Egypt. Studies presented to L. Kákosy* (1992); R. Bichler, Wahrnehmung und Vorstellung fremder Kultur. Griechen und Orient in archaïscher und frühklassischer Zeit, in: *Schuster 1996*, 51-74; D. Delia, Egyptians and Greeks, in: F.B. Tichener, R.F. Moorton (eds.), *The eye expanded. Life and the arts in Greco-Roman antiquity* (1999) 147-154 and, most recently, the small synthesis by J. Assmann, *Weisheit und Mysterium. Das Bild der Griechen von Ägypten* (2000).

As a rule, the journey to Egypt went via Puteoli and Alexandria and took at least 12 days[620]. Already in the second century BC, in the years 140/139 BC, a Roman delegation, led by Scipio Aemilianus, travelled as far as Memphis and in 116 BC there were Roman travellers in Philae, judging from the graffiti they left. The touristic character of the visit by L. Mummius in 112 BC seems clear on the basis of a preserved papyrus with special instructions for his stay[621]. Apart from the Pharaonic monuments and the typical Egyptian temples and religion, frightening and interesting at the same time, the Romans also appreciated the climate and the flora and fauna. Usually people stayed in Lower Egypt, but travels further up the Nile are also known[622]. With the conquest of Egypt, Roman soldiers and officials came to Alexandria and Egypt on a large scale. On the one hand, this would have led to a larger and more diverse number of Romans in Egypt than in the period before this, on the other hand the country became an imperial province and travelling was only allowed with a special permit, whilst members of senatorial families were not allowed to go there at all. In neither period was there any mass tourism in the late 19th century sense of the word.

3.1 *Roman literary sources concerning Egypt, Egyptians and the Egyptian presence in the Roman world*

(Horace, *Ode* I, 37)

Nunc est bibendum, nunc pede libero
pulsanda tellus, nunc Saliaribus
ornare pulvinar deorum
tempus erat dapibus, sodales.

Antehac nefas depromere Caecubum
cellis avitis, dum Capitolio
regina dementis ruinas
funus et imperio parabat

contaminato cum grege turpium
morbo virorum, quidlibet inpotens

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[620] *André/Baslez 1993*, 369; cf. primarily *Smelik/Hemelrijk 1984*, 1938-1945 ("travels to Egypt in Roman times").

[621] Cf. *Meyboom 1995*, 164-166 for these relations between Rome and Ptolemaic Egypt, and, in general, *Van 't Dack 1980*.

[622] Cf. *André/Baslez 1993*, 366-372 sv. "L'Égypte mystérieuse".

sperare fortunaque dulci
ebria. Sed minuit furorem

vix una sospes navis ab ignibus
mentemque lymphatam Mareotico
redegit in veros timores
Caesar ab Italia volantem

remis adurgens, accipiter velut
mollis columbas aut leporem citus
venator in campis nivalis
Haemoniae, daret ut catenis

fatale monstrum. Quae generosius
perire quaerens nec muliebriter
expavit ensem nec latentis
classe cita reparavit oras,

ausa et iacentem visere regiam
voltu sereno fortis et asperas
tractare serpentes, ut atrum
corpore conbiberet venenum

deliberata morte ferocior,
saevis Liburnis scilicet invidens
privata deduci superbo
non humilis mulier triumpho.

When Quintus Horatius Flaccus in 30 BC heard of the victory of Octavian and Cleopatra's suicide, he celebrated this important Roman victory with the poem quoted here. As various commentators have observed, it is notable that in this poem, the heavily moralising Horace, presenting himself as a patriotic Roman, manipulates the historical facts in such a way that the image of Cleopatra takes a positive turn. What began as a Roman triumphal song thus nearly becomes a eulogy for the defeated queen:

> "as we read the last line it is easy to forget that 'mulier' and 'triumpho' are logically opposed. The verbal arrangement suggests that the triumph belongs Cleopatra as well"[623].

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[623] S. Commager, *The odes of Horace. A critical study* (1962) 93, 88-98 for the ode in general. Other useful comments are given by A. Kiessling, *Q. Horatius Flaccus. Oden und Epoden* (1955, besorgt von R. Heinze) 154-159; E. Fraenkel, *Horace* (1957)

These kinds of documents are very important in the examination of the relations between Rome and Egypt. The problem of the limited possibility to generalise and the limited context of classical literary texts is evident, but this should only lead to a critical examination of this source material not to a repudiation[624]. Below, first a representative number of texts of Roman authors on Egypt and Egyptians will be presented. On the basis of an investigation of this source material, an impression can be gained of the image of Egypt and Egyptians in (the upper class of) Roman society. There is one modest monograph on the image of Egypt in Roman literature; some sub-aspects have been discussed more extensively[625]. The intention of this section is clearly not to enlarge Meyer's overview from 1965 with sub-aspects studied in detail and new finds; even though such a corpus with all Roman literary sources concerning Egypt and Egyptians would certainly facilitate the investigation into the role of the country and her inhabitants in the Roman world. In this section it concerns constants, opinions on Egypt and Egyptians which recur repeatedly and of which it may be assumed that they are part of the Roman imagination in a more general sense. A number of

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158-161, who points out that the Romans were in awe of the dignity of persons/ enemies in general, and that Horace's moral appreciation of Cleopatra therefore applies to her dignified behaviour and that this does not necessarily have anything to do with his opinion about Egypt in general; and K. Quinn, *Horace. The odes* (1980) 192-194 (with much historical information).

[624] Within archaeology, literary sources have been used uncritically for a long time by some, which has led to an ambivalent attitude towards this source material by others. With the quoted Ode of Horace it is useful to remember that he, as a son of a freedman, was to a large degree dependent upon the favour of Octavian and that the positive words about the later emperor should also be seen in that light.

[625] *Meyer 1965*; a large part of the texts can also be found in *Sonnabend 1986*. Sub-aspects: J. Leclant, Reflets de l'Égypte dans la littérature latine d'après quelques publications récentes, *REL* (1958) 81-85; I. Trencsényi-Waldapfel, Eléments égyptiens dans la poésie latine de l'âge d'or, *Annales Universitatis Scient. Budapestinensis* 6 (1965) 3-13; I. Becher, *Das Bild der Kleopatra in der griechischen und lateinischen Literatur* (1966); B. Postl, *Die Bedeutung des Nil in der römischen Literatur* (1970); *Malaise 1972b*, 244-251 ("les auteurs latins et la religion égyptienne"); R. Lonin, Les trois approches de l'Ethiopien par l'opinion gréco-romaine, *Ktema* 6 (1981) 69-87; *Dauge 1981*, index. sv. l'Egypte/Égyptiens; *Smelik/Hemelrijk 1984* (on Roman opinions in relation to the Egyptian worship of animals); M. Ciceroni, Introduzione ed evoluzione dei culti egizi a Roma in età repubblicana. La testimonianza delle fonti letterarie, in: *Roma e l'Egitto* I, 103-107; A. Etman, Cleopatra and Egypt in the Augustan poetry, in: *Roma e l'Egitto* I, 161-175; G. Monaco, Connotazioni dell'Egitto negli autori latini, in: *Roma e l'Egitto* I, 261-264 (in which geographical remarks are mainly the focus) and *Alston 1996*.

texts illustrative of a certain period or a certain view will thereby be further examined.

3.1.1 *From the third century BC onwards to Catullus*

With authors from the third and second century BC, Egypt is cited as a country 'which is very far away'; a notion which later authors also frequently use. With that theme, exotica are named such as Egyptian honey (Plautus), Egyptian fish (Lucilius), special plants and animals (Varro), or the flood of the Nile (Ennius). Attention to the remarkable Nile flood and theories on its cause, as well as to the sources of the Nile, is customary in the tradition of texts of Greek writers and philosophers. The Egyptian gods, such as Isis and Sarapis, are written about as well (Varro). In a comedy by Plautus (c. 250-185 BC) black Egyptians are mentioned who are walking in the circus with water jugs. There is no author with a consistently negative connotation of Egypt and Egyptians[626].

With Cicero references to Egypt and Egyptians occur frequently; often in general contemplations of the philosopher Cicero on certain subjects such as religion, ways of living, etc., in which the Egyptian gods and traditions are discussed. A topos, already known in the Greek world and also mentioned by Cicero, is the cruelty of the Egyptian king Bousiris[627]. He also mentions the murder of Pompey which occurred on his arrival in Egypt; an occurrence that would become another topos in Roman literature. Cicero is mainly critical of the Egyptian religion: Isis priests are charlatans and the Egyptian worship of animals should be sharply denounced. In a plea as orator for Rabirius, Cicero paints Alexandria negatively as a chaos, with the aim to slander the adversary of his client. This episode from what may be called the 'Egyptian affair', illustrates well the political relations between the two countries in the first century BC and will have made a not unimportant contribution to the Roman imagination of Egypt in that period. Gaius Rabirius Postumus was an important Roman financier, who had to see to it that the money was collected which had been promised by Ptolemy XII after the occupation of Alexandria by the Roman troops in 55 BC, led by Aulus Gabinius, pro-consul of the province of Syria. The pharaoh, who had been put on the throne again by the Romans, had large debts because of his luxurious lifestyle which he maintained during his forced exile in Rome, and also because of the Roman armed intervention which he had had to buy off in order to get back on the throne. Rabirius was appointed as treasurer of the royal finances in Alexandria to make sure that the Roman creditors, among whom he, Gabinius and Pompey were the most important, would actually see some of that money; he was probably offered 10% for this assignment. After his return to Rome in 54 BC, Aulus Gabinius was charged with a number of offences: contempt of the Senate, by operating without their permission with a Roman army in foreign territory, extortion and violence. In the end he was sentenced to a large fine which he could not or refused to pay and he chose exile. Rabirius' treasury ended disastrously; he fell into disgrace and was imprisoned, but managed to escape eventually. After his return to Rome, the prosecutors tried to recover the money from Rabirius, which they never received from Gabinius. The witnesses summoned from Alexandria in the Gabinius affair moreover stated that he had not received any money from Ptolemy and hence, the prosecutors reasoned, Rabirius would have received it. In his defence, Cicero tried to prove that no money had found its way to Rabirius; that on the contrary the Roman eques had fallen victim of the whole affair and had returned destitute from Alexandria. To that end, the Alexandrian witnesses, whose statements are also used in this case, had to be discredited, for which Cicero gratefully used the Roman preconceptions:

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[626] It concerns many small fragments by various authors; it should suffice here to refer to secondary literature. In order to understand the literary sources as much as possible from their original context, for every author the general study by von Albrecht will be quoted, thus providing an introduction to their life and work, as well as a selection and discussion of important texts. Plautus: *Meyer 1965*, 159-160 (text 4-6); *von Albrecht 1997*, 163-206; notable is the fragment from *Poenulus* (1290) which testifies to Egyptians living in Rome: out of anger, a certain Agrastokles wants to beat up his girlfriend to such an extent that she will become blacker than the blackest Egyptian slaves, who walk through the circus with jugs of cooling water. To indicate Egyptians, Plautus uses a grammatical construction which is usually employed, for instance, for the names of animals. Lucilius: *Meyer 1965*, (text 7); *von Albrecht 1997*, 250-266. Varro: *Meyer 1965*, 161-163 (text 13-25); *von Albrecht 1997*, 593-616; some ten references can be found in his work to Egyptian gods and exotica. Ennius: *Meyer 1965*, 158-159 (text 1-3); *von Albrecht 1997*, 129-146.

[627] For the Greek period cf. now M.C. Miller, The myth of Bousiris. Ethnicity and art, in: B. Cohen, *Not the classical ideal. Athens and the construction of the Other in Greek art* (2000) 413-442.

> "audiebamus Alexandriam, nunc cognoscimus"[628].

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[628] Cited after the edition of E. Olechowska, *M. Tulli Ciceronis*, fasc. 25 (1981). See in general *Marcus Tullius Cicero, Sämtliche Reden, eingeleitet, übersetzt und erläutert*

In one of his letters to Atticus, Cicero indicates that he would like to visit Alexandria and Egypt: he thus places himself in the tradition of the Greek philosophers who saw Egypt as the cradle of science and visited the country for that reason. Besides, Cicero seems to have written a poem in Alexandrian style, of which only the title (*Nilus*) has been preserved. In a number of letters mention is made in passing of Egyptian slaves and freed men: direct evidence of Egyptians living in Rome. Cicero himself had a female slave called Aegypta and in Atticus' service or his there were an Isidorus and a Serapeion; probably slaves originating from Egypt[629].

Other authors from the first century BC, casually mention Egypt and the Egyptian gods. Caesar twice characterises Alexandria and the Alexandrians as lawless and unreliable[630]. Lucretius in his didactic poem on nature of course dealt with the Nile flood and mentions Egypt, in the tradition of Varro and Ennius, also in passing, in different connections, seemingly without showing any special interest in the country[631]. Catullus mentions the Isis temple as a place for romantic practices and also gives evidence of the presence of the Egyptian gods in Italy: when Catullus wants to indicate that he will be silent as the grave, he says: *et factum me esse puta Arpocratem*[632]. Statius refers to the Egyptian presence in Italy: he mentions young Egyptians who were brought to the country for the purpose of prostitution, and shows his knowledge of the Egyptian religion by his commentary on ceremonies around the *Inventio Osiridis* and an introduction to the Egyptian religious perception[633].

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von M. Fuhrmann (1980). Cf. for the person and career of Rabirius Postumus in general now M. Siani-Davies, Gaius Rabirius Postumus: a Roman financier and Caesar's political ally, *Arctos* 30 (1996) 207-240.

[629] Cicero: *Meyer 1965*, 164-167 (text 31-66); *Smelik/Hemelrijk 1984* sv.; *Sonnabend 1986*, Personenregister sv. Tullius Cicero, Quellenregister sv. Cicero; *von Albrecht 1997*, 517-563.

[630] Caesar: *Sonnabend 1986*, Quellenregister sv. Caesar; *von Albrecht 1997*, 405-433.

[631] Lucretius: *Meyer 1965*, 160-161 (text 8-12); *Sonnabend 1986*, 95; *von Albrecht 1997*, 282-320.

[632] 102, 4, here cited after the edition of K. Quinn, *Catullus. The poems* (2nd edition, 1973) Catullus: L. Herrmann, Catulle et les cultes exotiques, *La nouvelle Clio* 6 (1954) 239-241; *Meyer 1965*, 163-164 (text 27-30); *von Albrecht 1997*, 334-359.

[633] Statius: *Malaise 1972b*, 249 and 323.

3.1.2 *Poets around Octavian*

Virgil writes about Egyptian exotica a few times. In the *Georgica*, the praising of the new prefect of Egypt, Gallus, is reason for a short description of the country whereby in particular the proverbial wealth of Egypt is heavily emphasised. Also a number of other topoi evidently related to Egypt are mentioned, such as the seven arms of the Nile and the cruelty of Bousiris[634]. In addition, Egypt plays a role as enemy of Rome. Cleopatra and Egypt are reviled in order to glorify Octavian and his victory at Actium and a number of stereotypes is thereby used. The notable Egyptian worship of animals, which was very repugnant to the Romans, is a beloved target, often ridiculed in this period. An illustration is the description of Aeneas' shield in book 8 of the *Aeneid* with an allusion to the battle near Actium, in which the combat, entirely in line with the Augustan propaganda, is represented as a meeting of Roman and Egyptian gods[635].

Horace speaks out negatively about Egyptians in his above mentioned Ode, but that is not surprising in a victory poem for Octavian[636]. Nearly all negative stereotypes fashionable with respect to Egypt and Egyptians occur in the third and fourth strophe of the poem. A negative reference to the Egyptian gods can perhaps be found in the first book of the *Epodes*: Horace relates about a beggar who tries to arouse some compassion with a crowd of bystanders and he has the man swear "by Osiris". However, the same poet, in a poem to Chloe, appeals to Venus "goddess of the snow-free Memphis", by whom probably Isis-Aphrodite is meant[637]. In addition, a number of neutral references to the Nile and the Nile flood can be found in his work[638].

At first sight, the elegiac poets Tibullus and Propertius seem to provide more outspoken information concerning appreciation of the

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[634] *Georgica* III 5. Vergil: A. Tomsin, Vergile et l'Égypte, *AC* 22 (1953) 412-418; *Meyer 1965*, 167-168 (text 67-86); *Smelik/Hemelrijk 1984; Sonnabend 1986*, 55, 97, 100; *von Albrecht 1997*, 667-710.

[635] *Aeneid* VIII, 696-700, cited after the edition of C.J. Fordyce, *P. Vergili Maronis, Aeneidos Libri VII-VIII* (1977): "regina in mediis patrio uocat agmina sistro, / necdum etiam geminos a tergo respicit anguis. / omnigenumque deum monstra et latrator Anubis / contra Neptunum et Venerem contraque Mineruam / tela tenent."

[636] *Ode* I, 37, cf. the beginning of this section.

[637] *Carmina* 3, 26 lines 9-12.

[638] Horace: M. Renard, Horace et Cléopâtre, *Études Horatiennes* (1937) 188-199; *Meyer 1965*, 168-169 (text 87-91); *Sonnabend 1986*, 54-55 (with further literature in n. 151), 94; G.A. Tourlidès, Horace, Vénus et les dieux égyptiens, in: *Roma e l'Egitto* I, 353-354 and *von Albrecht 1997*, 711-741.

Egyptian gods[639]. In one of Tibullus' poems his beloved Delia, a follower of the cult of Isis, plays a key role. Delia appeals to the goddess for recovery of the sick Tibullus and actively worships Isis after his recovery. However also after his recovery Tibullus is not convinced of the qualities of the Egyptian goddess and always places against this kind of foreign influence the original Roman values and corresponding deities, such as the penates: a continually recurring theme in the poem. Other girlfriends of Tibullus are characterised as followers of the Isis cult as well. The elegy for the birthday of general M. Valerius Messala first gives an impression of his conquests, including area's in the eastern Mediterranean and also Egypt. Next Osiris is called on to adorn the party with playing and dancing, when a large number of religious details concerning the god are given: a kind of Osiris hymn, testifying to specific knowledge of the Egyptian religion[640].

Cynthia, the girlfriend of Propertius, is another follower of the Isis cult, as appears from his poems. He is annoyed by the periods of ritual sexual abstinence, which the goddess tells her to observe, and resolves in that matter to one day drive off Io, a mythical manifestation of Isis[641]. In addition, Propertius devotes a part of a poem to the victorious battle near Actium as part of the presentation of Cleopatra as an example of a dangerous woman, thereby exhibiting a large number of the already mentioned Roman stereotypes[642]. In yet another poem Actium plays a key role. The so-called Actium elegy (from c. 16 BC) gives a description of the sea battle between Octavian and Cleopatra—Mark Antony is not mentioned—at which Apollo, who procures the victory for the Romans, plays an important role[643]. This all by the way does not prevent Propertius from enjoying Egyptian entertainment on a fine evening[644].

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[639] It should be realised here of course that Tibullus and Propertius did not write primarily to depict reality but to amuse. The autobiographical character of such, at first sight very personal works can therefore certainly be doubted.

[640] Tibullus: *Meyer 1965*, 169-170 (text 92-105); L. Koenen, Egyptian influence in Tibullus, *ICS* 1 (1976); *Sonnabend 1986*, 130, 139 ff.; *von Albrecht 1997*, 754-769. Cf. for the Messala elegy P. Grimal, Le dieu Sérapis et le Genius de Messala, *BSFE* 53,4 (1969) 42-51 and F. Klinger, Tibulls Elegie auf den Geburtstag des Messalla, in: *Römische Geisteswelt. Essays zur lateinischen Literatur* (1979) 444-457.

[641] In this text (II, 33, 20, cited after the edition of W.A. Camps) Propertius nicely remarks: "cum Tiberi Nilo gratia nulla fuit".

[642] Propertius III 11, 29-55.

[643] IV, 6. See for this text most recently J. Isager, Propertius and the *monumenta* of Actium (IV, 6 as a topographical source), in: S. Dietz & S. Isager, *Proceedings of the Danish Institute at Athens* II (1990) 399-411.

Ovid's works are full of references to Egypt and the Egyptian religion, also in a more general sense than with Tibullus and Propertius. In the *Metamorphoses*, Egyptian gods are extensively referred to, amongst other things the arrival of Io in Egypt is discussed. A number of notable associations with Egypt and the Egyptian religion, which evidently kept running through Roman minds, also returns in Ovid: the ritual periods of sexual abstinence in the Isis cult, the Isis temple as a place of amorous practices, the murder of Pompey in Egypt, etc. In the *Metamorphoses* also a negative remark about Cleopatra, to praise the victory of Octavian, is present[645].

3.1.3 *The first centuries AD*

Authors from the first century AD, such as Seneca, Pliny the Elder, Lucanus and Martial mainly repeat stereotypes formulated in the first century BC: Cleopatra wanted to keep the upper hand over Rome and is a dangerous woman, Alexandria and Canopus are pernicious places, worship of animals is absurd and the Isis cult in Italy has a number of amorous connotations. Of these, Pliny the Elder is distinctly negative about Egypt and Egyptians and in his *Naturalis Historia* he therefore calls on his readers not to be too fascinated by that exotic country on the Nile[646].

Seneca thinks it unacceptable that followers of Isis have to kneel and complains about the debauchery of Canopus[647]. Perhaps Seneca also wrote a treatise *De situ et sacris Aegyptiorum.*

With Lucanus, again Canopus as well as Memphis are in a bad light, whereby the Egyptian worship of animals, the murder of Pompey, and Cleopatra are used as arguments. The author even devotes an extensive discussion to Caesar and Cleopatra[648]. Martial alludes to the Isis temple as a place of amorous practices and also mentions "the brutes of the Nile"[649]. There are a few remarks in Petronius' *Satyricon*, which illustrate the presence of Egyptians in Rome: it concerns Alexandrian and Ethiopian slaves and artists. Notable is also the fact that Egyptian painters are accused of having deteriorated the art of Roman painting[650].

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[644] "Nile, tuus tibicen erat, crotalistria Phyllis, / et facilis spargi munda sine arte rosa, / Magnus et ipse suos breuiter concretus in artus / iactabat truncas ad caua buxa manus." IV, 8, 39-42, cited after the edition of W.A. Camps, *Propertius, Elegies, book IV* (1965). Propertius: *Meyer 1965*, 170-171 (text 106-116); *Sonnabend 1986*, 56, 95, 97, 130; *von Albrecht 1997*, 769-786.

[645] *Metamorphoses* XV, 826-831. Ovid: *Meyer 1965*, 172-173 (text 117-156); *Sonnabend 1986*, 131; *von Albrecht 1997*, 786-823.

[646] 36, 103. Pliny: *von Albrecht 1997*, 1265-1275.

[647] Seneca: P. Feider, Sénèque en Égypte, *BIFAO* 30 (1930) 83-87; R. Turcan, *Sénèque et les religions orientales* (1967); *Dauge 1981*, 138; *Sonnabend 1986*, 78, 96; *von Albrecht 1997*, 1158-1209.

[648] Lucanus: M.G. Schmidt, *Caesar und Kleopatra. Philologischer und historischer*

It is not surprising that also the satirist Juvenal uses the above mentioned stereotypes. He gets angry about the amorous practices occurring in the Isis temple, about the ritual periods of sexual abstinence, about the ridiculous priests and absurd ceremonies. The 15th satire pokes fun at the Egyptian worship of animals, superstition and cannibalism[651].

Apuleius from Madaura, in North Africa, wrote c. AD 170 his *Metamorphoses*, usually called *The golden ass*, which goes back to a, not preserved, Greek novel. In 10 books are told the adventures of the hero Lucius, who, as a result of the application of a wrong magic ointment, is turned into an ass but has kept his human feelings, senses and his memory, as a result of which he can later retell the whole story. In book XI, Lucius regains his human shape through the intervention of Isis and in gratitude he has himself ordained as her priest. This part of the text is, in many respects, so different, that it is generally assumed that Apuleius based himself for books I-X on a Greek original, but drew for book XI on his own experiences. This fits in with the information known about his person. In another work he tells about himself that he has taken part in a large number of initiation rites; the initiation into the Isis cult is apparently one of these. Book XI is therefore one of the most important sources of information on the Isis cult in the Roman period[652].

Kommentar zu Lucan 10, 1-171 (1986); *Sonnabend 1986*, 36-37, 44, 65, 93, 96-97, 109, 131; *von Albrecht 1997*, 913-932.

[649] Martial: *Sonnabend 1986*, 96; *von Albrecht 1997*, 1038-1055.

[650] Cf. for this interesting reference F.L. Bastet, 'Satyricon' en de schilderkunst, in: *De horizon voorbij. Wandelingen door de antieke wereld* V (1987) 197-214, with references to previous literature.

[651] Juvenalis: *Sonnabend 1986*, 103; *von Albrecht 1997*, 1019-1037. It is surmised that Juvenal was in exile in Egyptian Syene and therefore knew the country from first-hand experience, cf. G. Hinghet, *Juvenal the satirist* (1962) 27-31. Cf. for this satire specifically : J. Moreau, Une scène d'antropophagie en Égypte en l'an 127 de notre ère (Satire XV de Juvénal), *CE* 15 (1940) 279-285; *Smelik/Hemelrijk 1984* and *Alston 1996*, 100-103.

[652] For book XI specifically cf. J. Gwyn Griffith, *Apuleius of Madauros. The Isis-book (Metamorphoses, book XI), edited with an introduction, translation and commentary* (1975).

The last book of the *Metamorphoses* contrasts sharply, as far as attention for Egypt or Egyptian gods is concerned, with the other literary sources from the second century AD and later. In a compendium such as that by Cassius Dio, Egypt is still dealt with, in which the well-known stereotypes are repeated, in particular about the civil war between Octavian and Mark Anthony[653]. An illustrative close of this section in that respect is formed by Prudentius, born in AD 348, who mentions "the yapper Anubis"[654]. Prudentius also forms the transition to the Christian authors whose attitude in relation to Egypt and the Egyptian gods is not further referred to here[655].

3.1.4 *Conclusion*

In relation to the attitude of the Roman authors toward the Egyptian gods Malaise concludes:

> "En général, ils leur sont hostiles, les satiriques par profession et les élégiaques parce que ces dévotions et leurs exigences leur arrachaient une partie des passions du coeur féminin."[656].

In the important article by Hemelrijk and Smelik, in which for the first time there is explicitly focused on the Roman perception of the Egyptian worship of animals specifically and Egypt and the Egyptian culture in general, an extensive discussion of literary sources is summarised as follows:

> "Egypt must have had a great attraction for Rome also [just as for the Greeks, mjv], as an object for artists and travellers and as the homeland of the goddess Isis and her entourage. But perhaps because of the extremely awkward circumstances under which contacts between Rome and Egypt started, because of the conduct of Cleopatra, the dependence on corn-supply from Egypt, the insubordination of a population that did not want to pay their taxes and because of the Roman aversion to a essentially foreign culture and religion, the strong Roman dislike of Egypt persisted until the time of Julian."[657].

And finally, Dauge remarks in his discussion of the Roman relations with other people as reflected in the literary sources:

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[653] Cassius Dio: *Sonnabend 1986*, 33, 46, 53, 57, 59, 61, 66-68, 77, 97, 124.

[654] *Contra Symmachum* II, 532.

[655] Cf. *Malaise 1984*, 1628.

[656] *Malaise 1984*, 1628.

[657] *Smelik/Hemelrijk 1984*, 1955.

> "La littérature de l'époque [i.c. the second century BC, mjv] construit les archétypes, les images et les schémas d'opposition qui vont inspirer les siècles suivants. "[658]

The overview of Roman literary sources seems to confirm these three quotations. In this conclusion other publications are deliberately referred to as the overview presented above has few original discoveries and the aim of this section is not to make an extensive examination of the literary sources. In an investigation of the specific authors and their attitude toward Egypt, for instance, the conclusion may perhaps be less stereotypical and more nuanced than is suggested in this section. Important here, however, are constants in descriptions, generalising characterisations which form the Roman image of Egypt, as reflected in literature. The most important conclusion is that such an image does certainly exist and that, moreover, it is well-defined and generally used. In the second and first centuries BC, we can still speak of a differentiated perception of Egypt. Notable Egyptian matters are regarded with a sympathetic curiosity, whereas a contemporary situation adverse for the Romans leads to critical rumours. Cicero personifies the rupture between the more or less realistic view and the later period which seems mainly to testify to a recollection of stereotypes. In Cicero both the sincere admiration for the Egyptian culture is present, it hardly matters that he thereby places himself sometimes in a Greek tradition, and a negative perception of concrete expressions of that culture, such as the Egyptian cults and Alexandrians in Rome. Literary sources after Cicero emphasise almost only these negative aspects. As to the poets around Octavian this is not surprising, in view of the political situation. In Horace and Ovid however fascination can still be heard, either for Cleopatra (Horace), or for the Egyptian gods (Ovid). In the first centuries AD this generally seems to be past. The treacherous murder of Pompey, the pernicious enemy of the state Cleopatra, the incomprehensible worship of animals, the erotisising Isis cult, Egyptians as cowardly Orientals and barbarians: these characterisations repeatedly recur in the sources. An author who gives his own impression or attempts to nuance this perception by emphasising other aspects was absent or has not been preserved.

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[658] *Dauge 1981*, 85.

3.2 *Other Roman sources in relation to the discourse on Egypt and Egyptian culture*

As suggested several times in the theoretical framework at the beginning of this chapter, material culture can also be interpreted as reflection of a specific discourse. Aegyptiaca Romana can therefore be considered as part of a narrative structure. So far the material has never been investigated in such a manner; yet some interesting views have already been expressed in this vein.

Firstly concerning the Nilotic scenes; the most notable category of material culture concerning the Roman attitude toward the, Egyptian, Other. The typical representation of Egyptians as dwarves and pygmies and its implications, for instance, has already attracked attention from many authors. McDaniel was one of the first who thought a Roman feeling of superiority could be distilled on this basis, as did Meyboom most recently:

> "The ridiculous appearance and behaviour of the dwarves in Nilotic scenes may therefore have given Roman spectators a sense of superiority and power over that exotic world."[659]

Also Lembke's interpretation of the Iseum Campense implicitly draws conclusions on the Roman attitude toward Egypt[660]. It shows in fact that Egyptian and egyptianising objects were popular as exotica. The occurrence of Aegyptiaca in Rome, sketched in chapter IV, endorses such a hypothesis: for long periods Aegyptiaca were exhibited both in public areas and private dwellings. Although, as has been shown, this placing served in some cases to commemorate the Egyptian subordination, there also seems to have been an appreciation of aspects of typical Egyptian (material) culture in a general sense. Thus, a positive evaluation of an aspect of the Egyptian culture.

In the existing historical narration, as sketched in chapter I, indications can be found for the reconstruction of the Roman discourse on Egypt as well. Egypt's huge natural resources from which Rome profitted, the Egyptian cults which had so many Roman followers from all social strata, the fame of the culturally superior Alexandria: this must have resulted in positive emotions with the Romans in relation to the country of the Nile[661].

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[659] W.B. McDaniel, A fresco picturing pygmies, *AJA* 36 (1932) 260 ff.; *Meyboom 1995*, 151 for the quotation.

[660] Cf. extensively Ch. IV 2.5.4.

[661] See also *Alston 1996*, who considers philosophy and mythology elements of Egyptian culture and religion which were approved of.

This section, though briefly, shows the utmost importance of investigating other than literary sources in relation to the Roman discourse on Egypt. A partly different image is after all emerging; an image which seems to testify to a more positive perception.

4 *Concluding remarks and conclusions*

On the basis of the preceding it may firstly be assumed that Nilotic scenes can be seen as part of a narrative structure. With them, there is probably also something "masquée sous les lignes hiéroglyphiques de l'image", to use the formulation of Bucher (cf. section 1.1)[662].

It seems, whether the somewhat extreme, perhaps too radical poststructuralistic views of Mason (section 1) are accepted as true or not, that the notably frequent representation of the inhabitants of Egypt as dwarves and pygmies can also be explained by the fact that in particular these physical abnormalities articulate strongly. Apart from the appearance of these Egyptians, also their attributes and activities seem to be notably the reverse of the Roman norm. It does not seem to be a coincidence that of all the activities associated with the Nile flood, mainly festivities and sexual excesses are depicted. Also in this manner the inhabitants of Egypt were characterised as opposites to the ideal Roman. Like the European representations of American Indians, it seems that especially those aspects are projected which were difficult to place in the own culture. So, Egyptians are characterised by the Romans as cannibals (see Juvenal, *Satire* XV), worshippers of the devil (see the Egyptian worship of animals), sexually overactive (see the Nilotic scenes), and perverse (see the topos of the cruel Bousiris), to use the four most often used 16th/17th century European stereotypes. A Roman taboo was the experience of anal penetration. Precisely this kind of sexual intercourse has been depicted a number of times in Nilotic scenes, in all cases with dwarves/pygmies as protagonists. Also the Romans seem therefore (cf. section 1.2) to have depicted the non-European, in this case Egyptian, Other on the basis of dominant concepts in their own culture.

It seems logical to assume that the Roman conquest of Egypt played an important role in shaping and developing this representation. Just as is the case, for instance, in the European imagination on the Americas, a tendency is visible among the Romans to separate country and people. The delegation led by Scipio Aemilianus, mentioned several times before, speaks highly of Egypt as a country but denounces the inhabitants as bad guardians of that potential[663]. The necessity and legitimacy of Roman influence and colonial presence were thus at least suggested (cf. section 1.4). With the eventual conquest of Egypt, the same iconographic change seems visible with regard to the corresponding depictions, as Bucher thinks can be seen at the beginning of the systematic colonisation of the Americas. It has been observed before, that approximately from the period round 30 BC the first dwarves and pygmies populate Nilotic scenes[664]. An explanation for this has however never been given but is at hand: the change can be connected with the Roman colonisation of Egypt. Whereas there was before still a reasonably differentiated image of Egypt, this was replaced in the run up to, during and after the actual colonisation, by a well-disposed way of depicting by the coloniser, in which the Egyptians are characterised as merry-making dwarves and pygmies. Again, it seems that thus the Roman colonial presence is justified. In that connection, the observation by Thomas (cf. section 1.5) in respect of British 19th century colonial representations is also relevant. Although staged photographs as depictions of the indigenous population are something different from Nilotic scenes, both depict that population mainly as metaphors and stereotypes which express a certain quality. Whereas this concerned belligerence and aggressiveness with the Fijians, with the Egyptians it concerns indolence, self-indulgence, etc. Perhaps even a similar 'language of physical anthropology' can be observed in the Nilotic scenes: the hellenised upper class of the population is depicted as people who stroll dressed up in the vicinity of villae (cf. depictions of the Javan), whereas the indigenous Egyptians are depicted as naked, sometimes deformed dwarves and pygmies on or around the Nile (cf. depictions of Papua).

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[662] The conclusions drawn in this section mainly apply to the Italian Nilotic scenes and Aegyptiaca. In the North African/Spanish provinces and in the Near East Nilotic landscapes seem to be part of different narrative structures (Romanisation and Christianisation respectively) that could not be analyzed in this book.

A notable resemblance between the political-economic relations of the Roman-Egyptian and European-Egyptian situation comes to the fore by Mitchell's book (cf. section 1.6). In both periods, the coloniser managed to transform the colony efficiently and in a short time to become a major producer of a raw material wanted by the coloniser. After the conquest by Octavian, Egypt would for centuries be the granary of Roman Italy, whereas the English made Egypt into a major producer of cotton. Although Mitchell's publication suffers from a somewhat one-sided and rigid method of interpretation, his observation that colonising Europe saw the world as a well-ordered entity with its own superiority at its base, in which the cultural and colonial balance of power is fixed, pertains also for the Roman image of Egypt. In a description of the Roman world view and the Roman attitude toward the Other in section 2 of this chapter it was already shown that the Romans saw the world as a well-ordered structure with a superior Roman centre, in which the various relations were fixed. What is relevant is the question to what extent the Nilotic scenes can be seen, at least partly, as "symbolic representations of the world's cultural and colonial order", to use Mitchell's words. The fact that a change in the colonial relation between Rome and Egypt, from protectorate to colony after the battle at Actium, shows a change in the appearance of the Nilotic scenes, from predominantly ethnographic to predominantly stereotypical with dwarves and pygmies, suggests a positive answer to this question. That is also the case with the European colonisation of (black) Africa. Nederveen-Pieterse states that in that case the colonisers firstly profitted in an economic respect, without effectuating an actual colonisation; in the Roman situation there is a parallel with the second and first centuries BC until Actium. When this relationship is endangered for whatever reason, the Romans, as the Europeans, proceeded to colonise Egypt. In Europe, popular culture was at that moment made into a means of propaganda[665]. In the case of the Nilotic scenes we cannot speak of direct propaganda and the situation should probably be formulated more generally: Nilotic scenes reflected the Roman view of the world and thus also maintained that view in that matter. Concerning the other than political meanings assigned to the genre and Aegyptiaca Romana in general, the indication 'cultural imperialism' therefore seems to be too strong, although this aspect certainly could play a role[666].

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[663] Cf. Ch. I 1.2.

[664] *Meyboom 1995,* 150; see also Ch. III 4.3.3.

It is quite conceivable that the reduction of Egypt and the Egyptian culture to a representation gave the Roman observer a sense of control and superiority; a general and universal practice (cf. section 1.5)[667]. An important and probably significant difference between the European and Roman situation is however the character and balance of the fixed power relations. As observed, the economic aspect is very similar; the cultural aspect however absolutely not. Whereas 19th and 20th century Europe in a cultural sense feels superior to the colonised civilisations (cf. section 1.2), the Romans could not afford such an attitude as the opposite was evident. Perhaps that is the reason why the specifically articulated or depicted Roman image of Egypt is so purely negative. Although there was, apart from this cultural aspect, more to evaluate positively, such as the very popular Egyptian cults, the Egyptian grain which contributed to Rome's wealth, etc., both literary sources and Nilotic scenes are (in general) purely negative about Egypt and her culture. Perhaps an attempt was thus made to offer a counterweight so as to prevent a toppling of the Roman view of the world. The notable persistence of the Roman image of Egypt seems to reinforce that suggestion. Praz (cf. section 1.7) has shown how important was the role literary texts played in the creation and existence of such a reproduction. Apparently during the entire imperial time the need remained for a literarily shaped negative perception of Egypt, if the preserved sources may be considered as representative. That the said positive aspects of the other culture are thereby interpreted negatively, is a more general mechanism, which is also applied, for instance, in the European perception of modern America (cf. section 1.8).

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[665] Cf. *Nederveen-Pieterse 1990*, chapter V.

[666] See, in general, *Said 1993* and, specifically, C.R. Whittaker, Imperialism and culture: the Roman initiative, in: D.J. Mattingly (ed.), *Dialogues in Roman imperialism. Power, discourse and discrepant experience in the Roman empire* (1997) 143-163.

The concepts Egyptomania and Orientalism play an important role as parallels in the question of how these Roman reproductions of Egypt should be interpreted in detail. The connection observed between representations of the Other and a colonial situation is obvious to a certain extent; it seems more interesting to look at the specific character of this colonial image. There again the negative perception stands out. While Tacitus (cf. section 2.1) at the end of the first century AD applies a differentiated view to Roman society and, therefore, to the *Germani*, there is no culture criticism whatsoever in the Roman opinions of Egypt after the first century AD. It does however occur before that period and then there is, as mentioned, a more balanced consideration. As already suggested, this seems to have to be explained from a need to contrast. It appeared from chapter IV that Rome was 'littered' with Aegyptiaca, and also in other aspects, as mentioned several times in this section, Egypt played a significant role in the Roman world. In order to let Rome remain the ideal centre of the world (cf. section 2.3), there also had to be negative properties to counterbalace these dominant influences. Amongst others for these reasons the unreliability of the Alexandrians is emphasised and not the cultural prestige of the city; the Isis cult is associated with shady amorous practices and not with the immensely popular goddess whose *Navigium Isidis* ceremony coincided with the official opening of the Roman shipping season; etc. As described in section 2.2, a similar reaction can be observed with regard to the Greeks and the Greek culture. The conceptualisation of the Greeks, as reflected in the literary sources, is in general distinctly negative as well, and an attempt is thereby also made to have the merits have nothing to do with contemporary Greece and the Greeks in Roman reality.

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[667] See also *Said 1993*, esp. 136 ff.

Can we speak of Egyptomania in the Roman situation (cf. section 1.3.1)? As mentioned before (see section 1.9), it is not very useful to ask this question in such an absolute sense. There are notable similarities. Also in the Roman world, the Egyptian (material) culture received much interest—the period from the end of the second century BC until Actium—before a conquest of the country led to a peak in this fascination, when Egyptian and egyptianising ornamentation was applied in the own decoration. Nilotic scenes, such as the Nile mosaic of Palestrina (cat. no. 006) and that in Madrid (cat. no. 025), for instance, testify to a wellnigh ethnographic interest in curiosities of the country itself and the Egyptian culture, just as the literary sources of that period (cf. section 3.1.1). The Nile flood and special plants and animals both play a large role. After the Roman seizure of Egypt, in addition a mainly ornamental visual language becomes fashionable, just as in 19th century Europe: the 'richiami faraonici' studied by De Vos[668]. A large difference, however, seems to be the corresponding appreciation of the Egyptian culture. After Napoleon's campaign, Pharaonic culture began to serve in certain respects as an exemplum for the French nation, a fascination which lasts until today. This further developing very positive image of Egypt, mainly based on Pharaonic culture, would even result in the creation of Egyptology and a re-evaluation of Egyptian art and culture as an original, independent, fully-fledged tradition. As far as can be deduced from the available sources, an almost opposite reaction occurred in Rome. The partly positive appreciation which the Egyptian culture had with the Greeks (cf. the introduction to section 3) was not generally followed in Roman imperial times. Although an emperor such as Hadrian showed genuine interest in and probably also admiration for Egypt and the Egyptian culture, there seems to be no such positive appreciation as occurred in 19th century France. This can perhaps be explained by pointing to the necessarily much more dominant colonial discourse, as described above.

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[668] *De Vos 1980*, 75 for this quotation.

Can we speak of Orientalism in the Roman situation? The wish to answer such a question is risky as well; the more so as after Said's *Orientalism* (cf. section 1.3.2) a generally accepted definition of this concept is controversial. A fascination for Egypt as decor à la Flaubert and Nerval is entirely absent in the literary sources. The archaeological source material seems to suggest such a fascination though: Pompeian gardens were decorated in Egyptian style; Roman villae were decorated with Egyptian statues; Rome itself was adorned with Aegyptiaca, etc. Also for somebody like Hadrian for instance, a first visit to Egypt can have had something of a 'réunion', to paraphrase Flaubert. The source material does not enable us to hypothesise this matter more generally. A negative stereotyping of Egypt as part of the Orient, on the other hand, is abundantly present in the Roman written sources. Notable similarities can be demonstrated with the 19th century European discourse. Qualifications of Egyptians as sexually overactive, lazy and exceptionally cruel, to use three frequently occurring 19th century indications, have been mentioned several times in section 3.1. As has been concluded, also in the Roman situation we can, after some time, speak of a uniform image of Egypt, in which the same topoi occur continually. Said's conclusion, in its nuanced form and without the rigid uniformity which characterises the book, that such a depiction of the Orient is connected with the European imperialistic view of the world, seems applicable to the Roman situation as well. In the Roman period, there seems however to be no conscious method of cataloguing, which is even a debatable qualification for the 19th and 20th century. The Roman reaction should also now probably be formulated in more general terms against the background of the Roman world view and the cultural identity connected with it.

Our first general conclusion should be that the Roman discourse on Egypt was heterogeneous and far from monolithic. Like the Nilotic scenes themselves, it was constructed from different elements, which depending on the time and situation were more or less emphasised. A good illustration of such a heterogeneous character of the image of the Other is formed by a painting of the Venetian painter Gentile Bellini (c. 1430-1507), which therefore will be discussed here briefly[669]. In the painting Mark is represented preaching in Alexandria among Venetians and oriental men and women. In the background the basilica of Alexandria is depicted with a dromedary, a giraffe, a large obelisk and another monolith in front. It seems that on either side both medieval Alexandria with amongst other things minarets and contemporary Venice are painted. A further investigation of the representation reinforces the impression of the very diverse composition of this Italian image of Egypt. The preaching Mark, for instance, is dressed as a classical Roman, whereas the listening Venetians and Orientals are wearing contemporary clothing. Furthermore, the basilica of Alexandria looks suspiciously like S. Marco, and the obelisk is clearly modelled on the specimen Bellini must have seen during his stay in Constantinople in the years 1479-1480. With the monolith, Bellini probably wants to indicate the famous column of Pompey in Alexandria. The dromedary and giraffe refer to Egypt in a more general sense; however, Lehmann assumes that a journal by Cyriacus of Ancona, dating from the middle of the 15th century and heavily borrowing from Strabo and Diodorus, is responsible specifically for this depiction of the giraffe. The image of Egypt in this painting is therefore compiled of at least five elements: 1. 15th century Venice, 2. 15th century Constantinople, 3. Bellini's image of 15th century Alexandria and Egypt (he did not known the country from first-hand experience), 4. classical Alexandria, and 5. the journal of Cyriacus of Ancona. That such an observation is also important in a much wider sense has been shown in the therefore extensively discussed theories and examples by Thomas (cf. section 1.5). Not only is this concrete example of a representation of Egypt by Bellini little unequivocal, colonial projects are by definition ambiguous. Just as the composition of Bellini's

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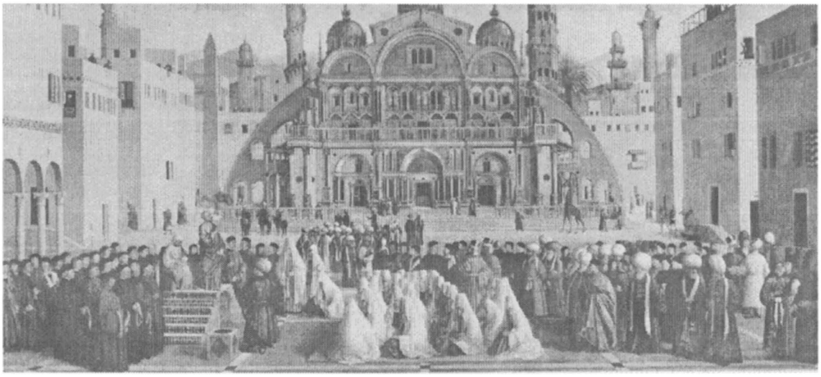
[669] The unfinished painting, called 'Predica di San Marco in Alessandria', was intended for the Scuola di S. Marco in Venice and is now in the Pinacoteca di Brera in Mailand. Cf. P.W. Lehmann, *Cyriacus of Ancona's Egyptian visit and its reflections in Gentile Bellini and Hieronymus Bosch* (1977), whose conclusions I follow here.



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painting, the Roman discourse on Egypt was "a fractured one, riddled with contradictions", in which "only localized theories and historically specific accounts can provide much insights into the varied articulations", to repeat two quotations from Thomas (cf. section 1.5). As discussed above, various players appear in the Roman discourse on Egypt: colonialism, economic and military superiority, cultural uncertainty, Greek traditions, contemporary Orientals in Rome, the Isis cult and Roman exoticism. In this conclusion an attempt has been made to portray as well as possible the different articulations testifying to both positive and negative perceptions. As, e.g., 19th and 20th century Europe, the Romans seem to have perceived the world they knew as an image, a constructed picture as well and did all they could possibly do to preserve their imagination. Nilotic scenes also played a role in that aspect of Roman society.

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Table 1. Nilotic landscapes in Italy, Latium (catalogue 001-027)

A=first century BC	1=public building
B=first century AD	2=house/villa
C=second century AD	3=sanctuary
D=third/fourth century AD	4=tomb
E=fifth/sixth century AD	5=unknown

001 Ostia, Terme di Nettuno	C-1
002 Ostia, Serapeo	C-3
003 Ostia, Case a giardino	C-2
004 Ostia, Isola sacra tomb 16	C-4
005 Ostia, Via Laurentina tomb 22	C-4
006 Palestrina, Curia	A-1
007 Palestrina, Unknown	C-5
008 Priverno, Domus della soglia nilotica	A-2
009 Rome, Reg. II, Iseum Metellinum (?)	D-3
010 Rome, Reg. II, near S. Stefano Rotondo	D-5
011 Rome, Reg. V, Basilica sotterranea	B-4
012 Rome, Reg. VI, Serapeum (?) base	C-3
013 Rome, Reg. VI, Serapeum (?) mosaic	A-3
014 Rome, Reg. VI, house	B-2
015 Rome, Reg. IX, Iseum Campense	C-3
016 Rome, Reg. X, Aula Isiaca	A-2
017 Rome, Reg. X, Casa di Livia	A-2
018 Rome, Reg. XII, villa on the Piccolo Aventino	C-2
019 Rome, Reg. XII, Vigna Maccarani	D-5
020 Rome, Reg. XIV, Ponte Sisto	C-5
021 Rome, Reg. XIV, Villa Doria Pamphili	A-4
022 Rome, Extra muros, near Montefinocchio	D-4
023 Rome, Extra muros, Via Ostiense	D-4
024 Rome, Extra muros, Unknown	D-4
025 Rome, Unknown, mosaic	A-5
026 Rome, Unknown, relief	C-5
027 Rome, Unknown, Campana plates	A-5

Table 2. Nilotic landscapes in Italy, Campania (catalogue 028-078)

028 Boscoreale, Villa ‘fondo Zurlo’	B-2
029 Herculaneum, Unknown, painting MN 9729	B-5
030 Herculaneum, Unknown, painting MN 8566	B-5
031 Pompeii, I 2, 24	B-2
032 Pompeii, I 6, 2 (Casa del Criptoportico)	A-2
033 Pompeii, I 6, 15 (Casa dei Ceii)	B-2
034 Pompeii, I 7, 1 (Casa di Paquius Proculus)	A-2
035 Pompeii, I 7, 11 (Casa dell’Efebo/di P. Cornelius Tages)	B-2
036 Pompeii, I 10, 4 (Casa del Menandro) painting	B-2
037 Pompeii, I 10, 4 (Casa del Menandro) mosaic	A-2
038 Pompeii, II 4, 2 (*praedia* di Iulia Felix)	B-2
039 Pompeii, II 9, 2	B-2
040 Pompeii, II 9, 4	B-2
041 Pompeii, V 2, i (Casa delle Nozze d’Argento)	B-2
042 Pompeii, VI 2, 4 (Casa di Sallustio)	B-2
043 Pompeii, VI 2, 14 (Casa delle Amazzoni)	B-2
044 Pompeii, VI 5	B-2
045 Pompeii, VI 7, 23 (Casa di Apollo)	B-2
046 Pompeii, VI 9, 6/7 (Casa dei Dioscuri)	B-2
047 Pompeii, VI 12, 2 (Casa del Fauno)	A-2
048 Pompeii, VI 17, 42 (Casa del Bracciale d’oro)	B-2
049 Pompeii, VII 1, 8 (Terme Stabiane)	B-1
050 Pompeii, VII 2, 25 (Casa delle Quadrighe)	B-2
051 Pompeii, VII 4, 48 (Casa della Caccia antica)	B-2
052 Pompeii, VII 4, 56 (Casa del Granduca/della Fontana)	B-2
053 Pompeii, VII 7, 32 (Tempio di Apollo)	B-3
054 Pompeii, VII 16, 17 (Casa di Ma. Castricius)	B-2
055 Pompeii, VIII 2, 17 (Terme del Sarno)	B-1
056 Pompeii, VIII 2, 28 (Casa con ninfeo)	B-2
057 Pompeii, VIII 2, 34/35 (Casa delle colombe a mosaico)	B-2
058 Pompeii, VIII 3, 8/9 (Casa del Cinghiale I)	A-2
059 Pompeii, VIII 5, 24 (Casa del Medico)	B-2
060 Pompeii, VIII 7, 24 (Casa dello Scultore)	B-2
061 Pompeii, VIII 7, 28 (Tempio di Iside)	B-3
062 Pompeii, IX 5, 9 (Casa dei Pigmei)	B-2
063 Pompeii, IX 5, 14-16	B-2
064 Pompeii, IX 6	B-2
065 Pompeii, IX 8, 6 (Casa del Centenario)	B-2
066 Pompeii, Terme Suburbanae	B-1
067 Pompeii, Villa dei Misteri	A-2
068 Pompeii, Villa di Diomede	B-2
069 Pompeii, tomb of Vestorius Priscus	B-4
070 Pozzuoli, Unknown	B-5
071 Stabiae, Villa Campo Varano	B-2
072 Stabiae, Villa di San Marco	B-2
073 Stabiae, Casa di Miri	B-2
074 Stabiae, regio San Marco	A-5
075 Campania, Unknown, mosaic MN	A-5
076 Campania, Unknown, painting MN 8561	B-5
077 Campania (?), Unknown, painting	B-5
078 Campania (?), Unknown, engraving	D-5

Table 3. Nilotic landscapes in Italy, other provinces (catalogue 079-084)

079 Samnium, Tivoli, Villa di Cassio	C-2
080 Picenum, Ancona	A-2
081 Umbria, Collemancio	C-5
082 Etruria, Santa Severa	C-2
083 Venetia, Brescia, via S. Rocchino/via Graziola	C-2
084 Venetia, Brescia, S. Giulia	B-2

Table 4. Nilotic landscapes in North Africa (catalogue 085-098)

085 Numidia, Timgad	D-1
086 Africa Proconsularis, El Alia	C-2
087 Africa Proconsularis, El Djem	D-2
088 Africa Proconsularis, Sousse B6	D-5
089 Africa Proconsularis, Sousse D3	D-2
090 Africa Proconsularis, Sousse D4	D-5
091 Africa Tripolitana, Lepcis Magna, villa del Nilo	D-2
092 Africa Tripolitana, Lepcis Magna, hunting baths, mosaic	C-1
093 Africa Tripolitana, Lepcis Magna, hunting baths, painting	D-1
094 Africa Tripolitana, Uadi ez Zgaia	D-1
095 Africa Tripolitana, Zliten, villa di Dar Buc Ammèra, mosaics	C-2
096 Africa Tripolitana, Zliten, villa di Dar Buc Ammèra, paintings	C-2
097 Cyrenaica, Cyrene	E-3
098 Cyrenaica, Qasr-el-Lebia	E-3

Table 5. Nilotic landscapes in Egypt (catalogue 099-101)

099 Aegyptus, Delta	A-5
100 Aegyptus, Tell Roba	D-5
101 Aegyptus, Unknown	A-5

Table 6 Nilotic landscapes in the European provinces (catalogue 102-121)

102 Hispania, Mérida, Calle del Portillo	C-5
103 Hispania, Mérida	D-5
104 Hispania, Italica, Casa de Neptuno	D-2
105 Hispania, Italica, Casa del Ginnasio	D-2
106 Hispania, Puente Genil	D-2
107 Gallia, Lyon, Insula V	C-2
108 Gallia, Lyon, Cybele temple (?)	B-3
109 Gallia, Mercin et Vaux	B-2
110 Gallia, Roches de Condrieu	B-2
111 Gallia, Villars	B-2
112 Gallia, Villelaure	D-2
113 Pannonia, Egyed	B-5
114 Pannonia, Székesfehévar	C-5
115 Illyricum, Perm	E-5
116 Dalmatia, Salonae	C-5
117 Graecia, Kenchreai	D-5
118 Graecia, Corinth	B-4
119 Graecia, Patras	D-2
120 Graecia, Thebes	E-5
121 Graecia, Delos	A-2

Table 7 Nilotic landscapes in the Near Eastern provinces (catalogue 122-131)

122 Syria, Antiochia, house of Ge and the Seasons	E-2
123 Syria, Hama	E-5
124 Syria, Qumnir el-Qubli	E-5
125 Palaestina, Beth Shean	E-1
126 Palaestina, Beit Jibrin	E-2
127 Palaestina, Et-Tábgha	E-3
128 Paleastina, Hadita	E-5
129 Palaestina, Sepphoris, Villa	D-2
130 Palaestina, Sepphoris, Nile festival house	E-5
131 Palaestina, Zay al-Gharby	E-5

APPENDIX

01 lamps

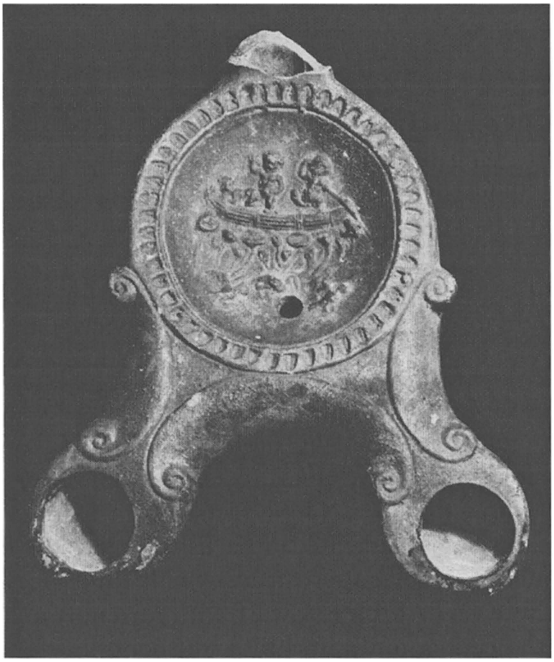
Terracotta lamps with Nilotic motifs have been preserved from many parts of the Roman Empire. They sometimes show representations which can actually be regarded as Nilotic landscapes, though often it only concerns separate Nilotic elements. The apparently most frequently occurring representation shows pygmies in a papyrus canoe or other boat. A number of examples is discussed here. No attempt has been made to make a representative overview, but the list below may serve as a point of departure in a further investigation of Nilotic scenes and Nilotic motifs on lamps.

1. The triangular handle of an oil-lamp from Alexandria (or the surroundings of the city, GRM, Alexandria, 19420, around AD 100) is decorated with a Nilotic scene. In the foreground of the picture the river is indicated by a fish, large lotus flowers and other waterplants. A papyrus canoe with three pygmies is sailing on the river. An older dwarf with an enormous phallus is tending the rudder and raises his right hand in the air in a gesticulating manner. On the forecastle a symplegma is taking place between a female dwarf sitting on hands and knees and a male standing dwarf who penetrates her from behind. Above the boat an ibis is depicted sitting on the pennant.

   E. Breccia, *Rapport sur la marche du service du musée en 1912* (1913) 36 sv. no. 86; D. Wildung, G. Grimm, *Götter und Pharaonen* (exhibition catalogue, Essen) (1978) sv. n. 146.

2. An almost identical picture decorates a lamp from Hawara (Aegyptian Museum, Cairo, C.G. 26378, 50-100 AD). In the foreground a bird is depicted, as well as large lotus flowers and other waterplants. A papyrus canoe with three dwarves is sailing on the river. A dwarf with a large phallus raises his right hand in the air while tending the rudder. On the forecastle a symplegma between a standing male pygmy and a kneeling female pygmy is taking place.

P. Perdrizet, *Les terres cuites Grecques d'Égypte de la collection Fouquet* I (1921) 135; G. Grimm, D. Johannes, *Kunst der Ptolemäer- und Römerzeit im Ägyptischen Museum Kairo* (1975) 27 sv. no. 64.



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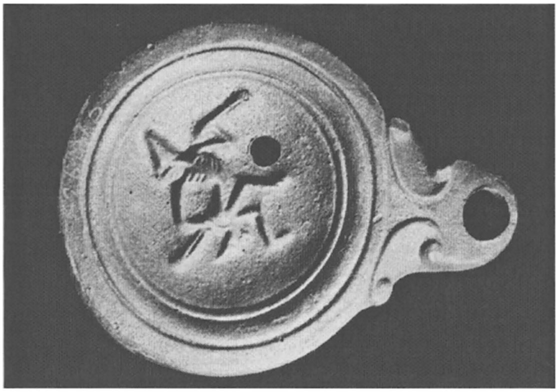
3. In the collections of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo is an oil-lamp showing a caricaturally depicted person, probably to be identified as a *cinaedos*.



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4. From Cyprus comes a lamp decorated with a Nilotic scene showing a man being chased by two crocodiles, as well as a fish and a boat. Other examples show birds among waterplants, amongst them a lotus.

   Th. Oziol, *Salamine de Chypre*, VII. *Les lampes du Musée de Chypre* (1977) sv. nos. 183 and 184-185.

5. In funeral contexts near Frankfurt/M-Praunheim and Trier have been found three lamps decorated with Nilotic themes. The representation shows a marshy environment with a female pygmy on a crocodile. The animal is depicted with a large phallus.

   G. Grimm, *Die Zeugnisse ägyptischer Religion und Kunstelemente im römischen Deutschland* (1969) 57, 187 sv. 89, 240 sv. 156-157.

6. A lamp of unknown origin (now in the collection of the Archäologisch Institut der Universität, Tübingen, AD 150-250) shows a pygmy with castanets in a boat.

   Pekáry 1999, 42 sv. Dt 110.

7. A comparable example (BM, London, Q 1363, AD 175-225) shows a dancing pygmy in a boat.

   D.M. Bailey, *Catalogue of lamps in the British Museum*, II (1980) taf. 79; *Pekáry 1999*, 102 sv. GB 35.

8. A lamp in Viterbo (Museo Civico 336,5) shows two dancing pygmies in a boat.

   Pekáry 1999, 308 sv. I V14.

9. A lamp from Sicily shows Nilotic themes.

   G. Sfameni Gasparro, *I culti orientali in Sicilia* (1973) sv. no. 170.

10. Several lamps from Roman Gaul show the Nilotic theme of a snake fighting a mongoose.

    J.-L. Podvin, Nouvelles lampes égyptisantes de la vallée du Rhône, *RA* (1999) 79-88.

02 sarcophagi

Three sarcophagi with Nilotic relief decoration have been included in the catalogue (cat. nos. 022-024). They were all found in the surroundings of Rome and all date to the period AD 250-300. Other examples of such sarcophagi have also been preserved. Generally, however, Nilotic elements play such a subordinate role that we can hardly speak of real Nilotic scenes. In other cases the sarcophagus reliefs have been so fragmentarily preserved that the Nilotic content of the representation can no longer be ascertained. It was therefore decided to include the three cases in which we are clearly dealing with an Egyptian landscape in the catalogue, and to mention here the remaining examples. In all cases, however, it seems to concern the same kind of representation with a similar backgound.

M. Lawrence, Ships, monsters and Jonah, *AJA* 66 (1962) 289-296; *Turcan 1966*, 585-589 ("Paradis symposiaques et nilotiques"); R. Turcan, Trois 'rebus' de l'iconographie romaine ou les pièges de l'analogie, in: *EIDOLOPOIIA. Actes du colloque sur les problèmes de l'image dans le monde méditerranéen classique, septembre 1982* (1985) 61-75, 71-73; *Pensa 1999*, 107-108.

1. Fragments of a child sarcophagus (MV, Rome) show sailing erotes with dolphins in the water; palm trees are visible on the embankment.

   W. Amelung, *Die Skulpturen des Vatikanischen Museums*, I (1903) 771 sv. 678; *Turcan 1966*, 587 sv. 4.

2. A similar representation can been seen on another child sarcophagus (MV, Rome, around AD 300), in which music-making erotes are shown in boats, with a palm tree depicted on the riverbank.

   Turcan 1966, 587 sv. 5; *Andreae 1963*, 139, 158; *Pekáry 1999*, 394 sv. Vat-13.

3. A badly preserved fragment from Ferentillo shows dancing putti in boats.

   Turcan 1966, 587 sv. 6; *Pekáry 1999*, 158 sv. I F1.

4. A sarcophagus relief in Karlsruhe (Badisches Landesmuseum, 29147, 100-200 AD) shows dancing and music-making erotes on the bank of the river, next to a couple on a couch and a palm tree. On the water one can see a boat with two fishing putti. A ship on the left side of the sarcophagus would have a stem shaped like an Isis bust.

   ASR I, 4 (1991) 15; *Pekáry 1999*, 26 sv. D 44.

5. A relief fragment in Bologna (Museo Civico Archeologico, G 1069/4382, 100-200 AD) shows two music-making putti and a fishing putto in a boat. A fourth putto seems to be falling overboard.

   Pekáry 1999, 152 sv. I-B 3.

6. Relief fragments preserved in the 'cimitero di Pretestato' in Rome (Museo, 925) show ships with erotes. On one of the fragments a wide column with a semicircular top, possibly referring to a Nilometer, can be seen between two ships.

   Pekáry 1999, 250 sv. Rom-Ci 24.

7. In the graveyard near S. Callisto there are similar kinds of fragments with, amongst other things, a music-making putto in a boat.

   Pekáry 1999, 254 sv. Rom-Ci 43.

03 small sculptures

Kozloff has argued that small statues of hippopotami—he discusses 5 pieces, including the specimen in the Cleveland Museum of Art which is the focus of his article—, together with the many (bronze) statuettes of dwarves and pygmies which are known, could be exhibited as a sculpture group. A bronze bottle from Tongeren in the shape of a dwarf (RMO, Leiden, KVZ 8, 0-100 AD, figure on page 456), e.g., can endorse this hypothesis. Judging by the round aperture in the right hand of the pygmy, he held a spear or such like. A statuette of an ibis or hippopotamus would result in a Nilotic scene executed in (small) sculpture. See the article by Chew for further examples of these kind of pygmy statues and further references. That also other, typical Nilotic stereotypes are known from small statues is illustrated by two small bronzes (Rheinisches Landesmuseum, Trier, O 1983.25), showing sexual scenes with pygmies in boats.

Kozloff 1984; *Ancient art : Greece, Etruria and Rome. Chosen from the collections of the National Museum of Antiquities at Leiden, the Netherlands* (1990) 97 sv. 52; H. Chew, Une statuette de pygmeé en bronze d'époque romaine à Davron (Yvelines), *Antiquités Nationales* 27 (1995) 133-144; *Pekáry 1999*, 40 sv. Dt 103.

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Italy

Latium

04 Nemi

From the sanctuary of Diana in Nemi stems an architectural relief fragment with Nilotic elements which is dated in the first half of the first century BC, mainly on the basis of a comparison with the Nile mosaic of Palestrina (cat. no. 006). It is decorated with a peopled scroll in which lotuses and two pygmies can be distinguished. The dating suggested is improbable on stylistic grounds. The comparison with the Nile mosaic of Palestrina and related Nilotic scenes is hardly appropriate as in fact no dwarves occur in these; moreover, the most relevant parallel, the painting in the Pompeiian Iseum also showing pygmies and other Egyptian elements in a peopled scroll (cf. cat. no. 061) and not mentioned in the publication of the fragment, is dated in the period around AD 70.

Moltesen 1997.

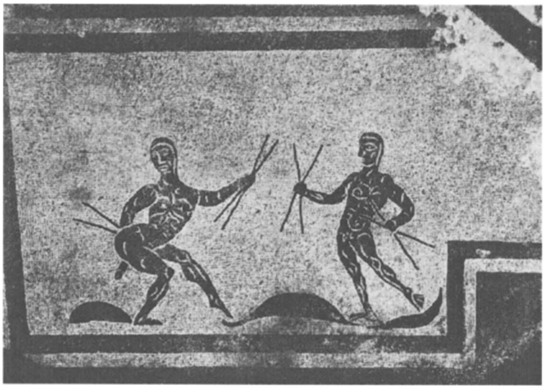
05 Ostia, III, v, 1

In room 4 of the Casa delle Volte Dipinte is the painted vault which gave the house its name. Bands run outward from the tondo and divide the vault into eight parts, to the outside of which lunettes have been painted. Scenes with two birds around a nest and a water scene with small fishing people alternate in these lunettes. It seems that we are dealing here with erotes and not with dwarves or pygmies as suggested by Felletti Maj and Cappel; other Nilotic elements are also completely lacking.

B.M. Felletti Maj, *Le pitture delle Case delle Volte Dipinte e delle Pareti Gialli* (Monumenti della pittura antica scoperta in Italia, Ostia I-II) (1961) 11-17; *Cappel 1994*, sv. W38.

06 Ostia IV, vii, 4

In the so-called caupona di Alexander Helix a black and white floor mosaic (around 200 AD) has been preserved. One of the scenes shows two persons with two crossed sticks in both hands. They appear to be dancing; one person is depicted with pronounced buttocks and a large phallus, comparable with the Blacks in the Casa dello Scultore paintings (cat. no. 060).



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Clarke 1979, fig. 58.

07 Ostia, Isola Sacra

Tomb no. 26 of the Isola Sacra shows a putto among ducks as remains of a painted decoration from the period around AD 200. In a marshy environment the putto is standing on a rock surrounded by five ducks, two of which are depicted in the characteristic turned-to-each-other manner. Although the representation could indeed possibly be related to the genre of Nilotic scenes, there are no indications for looking upon the putto as a reference to the 16 putti which symbolise an ideal Nile flood, as suggested by Ibrahim (in *Kenchreai*).

G. Calza, *La necropoli del porto di Roma nell'Isola sacra* (1940) 150-151; *Kenchreai*, 50.

08 Rome, Aventine

Remains of several mosaics were discovered in 1711 in the 'horto S. Sabinae Montis', on the Aventine near S. Sabina, in the ancient region XIII. It concerns the remains of probably nine panels which originally were part of one frieze. We do not know exactly what this frieze looked like as it seems that a number of panels is missing. The preserved pictures mainly show hunting scenes with animals. One of these (0.63 x 2.41, MV, Rome, around AD 200) clearly has an egyptianising character. In the centre of the picture a velum seems to be indicated. Under the velum stands a laughing dwarf with a small vase in his hand next to a kind of table and a standing amphora. On the left we can distinguish three dancing people: a man playing the double oboe and accompanying himself with a foot-rattle, a woman dressed in a voile gown and a black man with two sticks in his left hand. To the right of the velum the same scene is depicted, only this time with two black dancing men. The picture reminds of the festivities around the inundation of the Nile; no landscape element can be distinguished however. *Werner 1994* interprets the group of panels as circus scenes. The showing and hunting of exotic animals were indeed part of this as well as musical performances. *Werner 1998* sees the scenes as "mimische Aufführungen aus dem Umkreis der Schauspiele im Amphitheater".

Nogara 1910, 6; *Reinach 1922*, 117-4; *Blake 1936*, 67 ff, 174; *Van Essen 1954*, 82; *Werner 1994*, 231-235 sv. K 99; *Werner 1998*, 43-54.

09 Rome, Domus Aurea

In the first half of the 19th century the wall-paintings in porticus 21 of Nero's Domus Aurea pavilion were still visible. De Romanis (1822) mentions a landscape painting with palm trees and in his 1839 publication Nibby remarks: "parete dipinta a paesaggio a fondo azzurro con alberi di palma ed uccelli egiziani, come anatre e ibi".

10 Rome, Villa della Farnesina

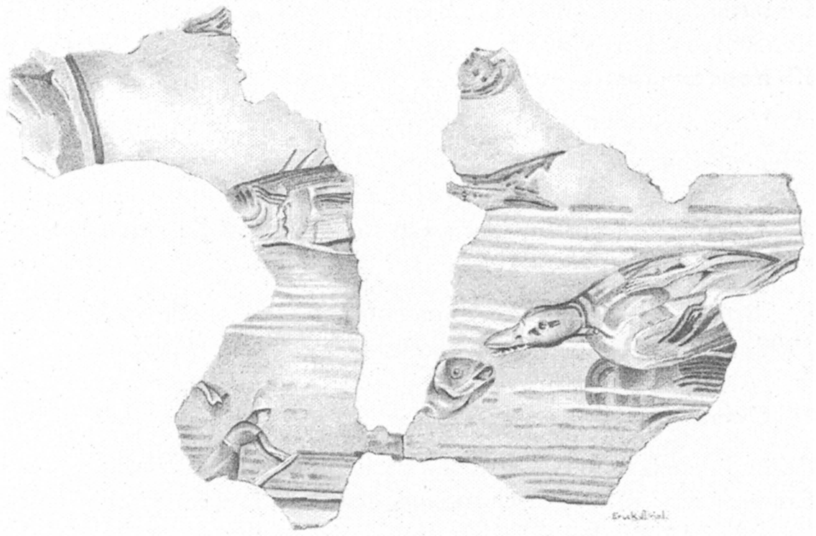
The Farnesina paintings show numerous Egyptian elements. The landscape paintings as well as some of the depicted subjects show resemblances with Nilotic scenes. Yet it seems that in no single case are we dealing with an Egyptian landscape. Söldner sees the Egyptian and egyptianising elements as allusions to the Augustan *aurea aetas* notion.

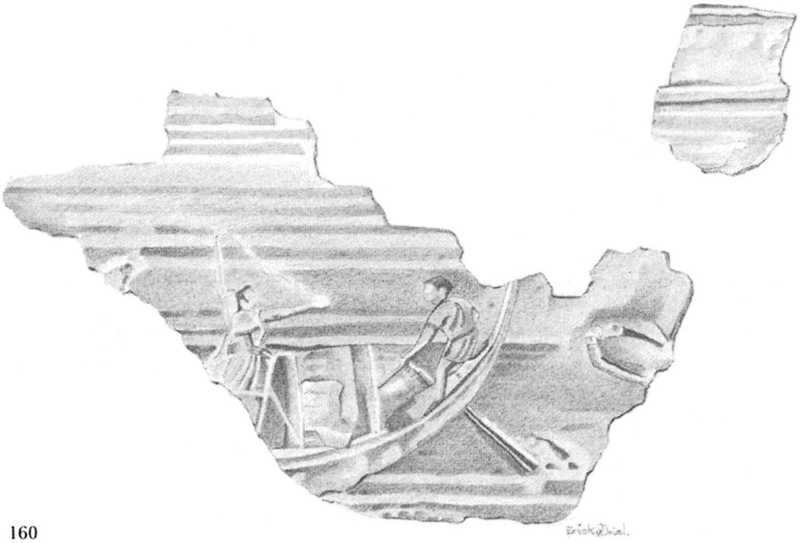
I. Bragantini—M. De Vos, *Le decorazioni della villa romana della Farnesina* (Museo Nazionale Romano, II. Le pitture, 1.) (1982); *Söldner 1999*, 106.

11 Rome, S. Maria Liberatrice

In the 19th century, mosaic fragments have been found in the neighbourhood of this church. The fragments, now preserved in the reserves of the MNR in Rome (135886), show a part of a fish and a duck as well as a boat with different persons. The fragments seem to have been part of the same composition that may be dated around 100 BC.

Werner 1994, 248 n. 9; *Werner 1998*, 143; *Versluys 2000*, 250-251 n. 59.





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12 Rome, Unknown

In the collections of the Palazzo dei Conservatori, a marble relief fragment has been preserved showing a crane among aquatic (Nilotic) plants.

Stuart-Jones 1926, 235 sv. 28.

Campania

13 Boscoreale

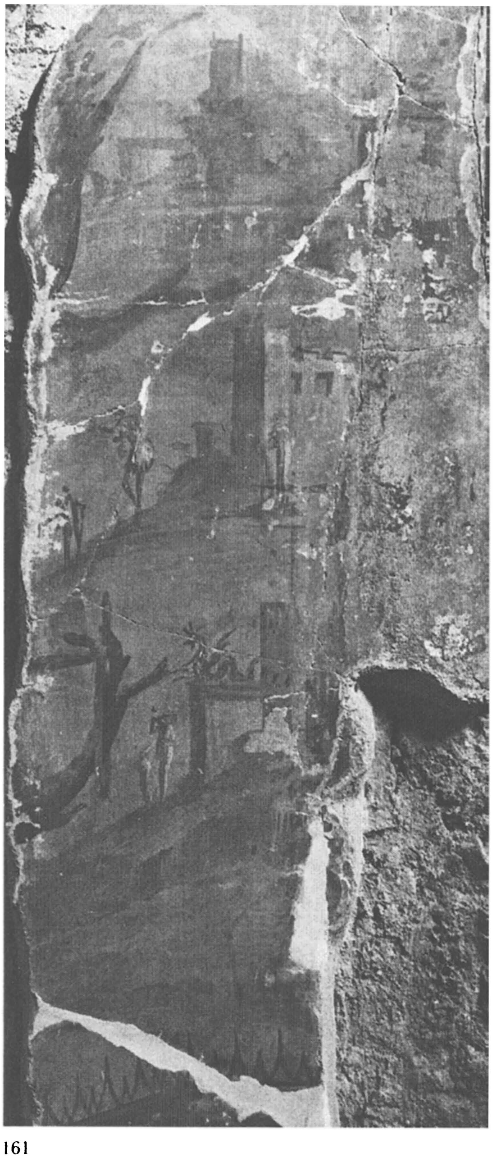
In the villa of P. Fannius Synistor, river or coastal landscapes are depicted which can be dated around 50 BC. The abundance of water, islands with shrines, activities of the population and some typical details like an Egyptian altar seem to suggest an Egyptian character.

V.J. Bruno, The Mariemont fragments from Boscoreale, in *Moormann 1993*, 223-233 (with previous literature); *Meyboom 1995*, 82.

14 Carmiano

Painted panels at the bottom of a triclinium wall of a relatively small Roman villa 'in località Carmiano' show ducks among what could possibly be lotus flowers. The remainder of the decoration of the context, to be dated around AD 70 and transferred to the Antiquarium of Stabiae, has a Dionysiac character.

J.M. Croisille, Les fouilles archéologiques de Castellammare di Stabia: découverts récentes, *Latomus* 25 (1966) 245-258, 251; *Pompeii—Picta fragmenta*, 77-80.



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15 Oplontis

The tympanum of the northern alcove in cubiculum 11 of the Villa of Oplontis originally showed a waterscape, probably a harbour-view. Clarke (1991) published a reconstruction of the painting in which it is designated as a Nilotic landscape. Some of the architecture can possibly be characterised as Egyptian; Nilotic elements are however lacking.

The large oecus (15) of the Villa of Oplontis shows painted pinakes with waterscapes as part of the wall decoration. Indications for a possible Egyptian character of the waterscape are some characteristic architectures and the pieces of land which rise above the water as islands.

The centre of the simply decorated walls of the porticus adjoining the large swimming pool (24) shows small pinakes with what perhaps are egyptianising waterscapes.

Tybout 1989, 342; *Clarke 1991*, 122; J.R. Clarke, Landscape paintings in the Villa of Oplontis, *JRA* 9 (1996) 87-107; *Meyboom 1995*, 82.

16 Pompeii, I 4, 5

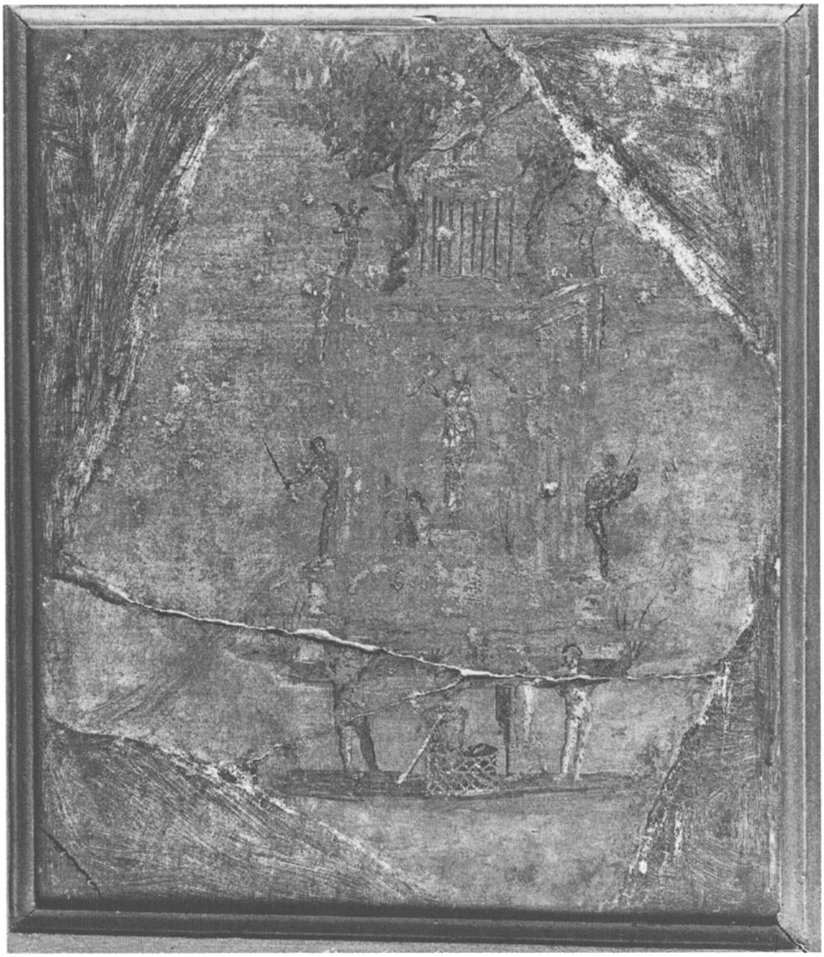
A central panel of the wall of this Pompeiian house has been preserved in Naples (MN 9605): a waterscape with a temple of Isis can be distinguished (figure on page 463). Perhaps we are dealing with a Nilotic landscape here; other specific Nilotic elements are however lacking. The frieze-shaped fragment MN 9610 comes from the same house. Again a waterscape is depicted, this time with islands on which perhaps the *abaton* is visible: the Egyptian character of the picture seems to be confirmed by the detail of a chapel with an Egyptian roof.

Schefold 1957, 351; *Moormann 1988*, 132-133 sv. 100.

17 Pompeii, I 4, 25 (Casa del Citarista)

The Casa del Citarista covered nearly three quarters of an insula and can probably be ascribed to the gens Popidia. A now lost painting from this huge house showed a bird and a reptile (lizard?) facing each other threateningly in a marshy environment. Perhaps such representations have a Nilotic background.

Italienische Reise, 122-123 sv. 5.



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18 Pompeii, V 1, 7 (Casa del Toro)

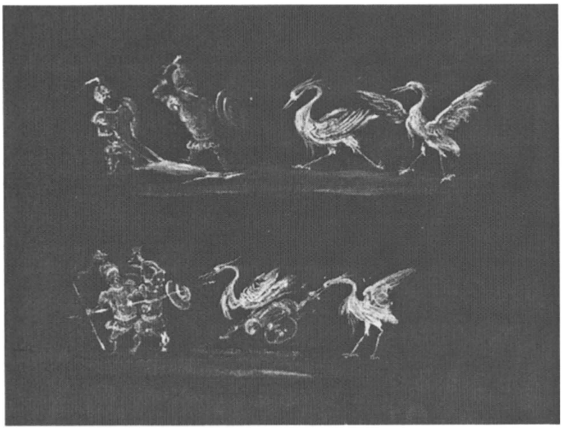
A frieze with pygmies, which can be dated around 30 BC, decorated the upper part of the wall of the atrium of the Casa del Toro. The preserved part (41 x 170, Antiquarium Pompeii and Casa del Citarista) shows dwarves in various occupations like travelling, shopping and dining; but no landscape elements.

Beyen II, 1, 72-73; *Cappel 1994*, sv. W3; *Meyboom 1995*, 82, V n. 13; *Pompeii—Picta fragmenta*, 113 sv. 64.

19 Pompeii VII 4, 31 (Casa dei Capitelli colorati)

Room m is decorated with paintings of pygmies dressed as soldiers who are fighting cranes. One of the pygmies has a dead bird in his hand and carries a shield, while another pygmy defends himself with a spear and shield. A different scene shows a similar picture in which the birds have the upper hand. In another room of the house was a tondo with a waterscape which seems to breathe an Egyptian atmosphere. Both paintings, which can be dated around AD 70, have only come down to us via 19th century drawings and engravings.

Schefold 1957, 185; *Italienische Reise*, 198 sv. 50; *Pompei* VI, 1053; *Cappel 1994*, sv. W17; *Disegnatori*, 551-552 sv. 84.



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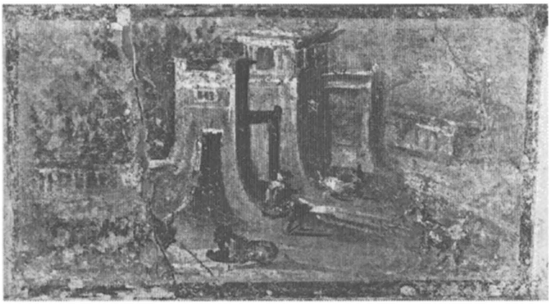
20 Pompeii, VIII 3, 14 (Casa della Regina Carolina)

Engravings by Morelli show that the atrium of this house was decorated with architectural paintings while the predellae show various figurative scenes with pygmies. In one of them pygmies are fighting large birds; in another pygmies fighting lions are depicted. Nilotic landscape features are lacking.

Pompei VIII, 398-399; *Cappel 1994*, sv. W22.

21 Pompeii, ?

In the depots of the Museo Nazionale in Naples (MN 9503) is a panel from a Fourth Style Roman wall-painting showing Egyptian towerhouses and other buildings in front of a grove. On the right, a porticus seems to be depicted in the background; on the foreground one can see a sitting man and a number of cows. Perphaps the picture refers to the *abaton* of Osiris or tombs associated with that grave in a more general sense.



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22 Pompeii, ?

A frieze-form painting, fragmentarily preserved in the MN, Naples (9496) shows a waterscape from which rise pieces of land. Porticoes with an upper floor are depicted with behind them a large wood with, amongst other things, cypress trees. Walking and boating people have been schematically indicated. Perhaps the picture refers to the tomb of Osiris which was located in a wood. More of this kind of frieze-form pictures, all dating to the period of the Fourth Style, have been preserved: MN 9610 (see this appendix sv. no. 16) and, less clear but seemingly with the same character, fragment MN 9606 (also from I 4, 5?).

23 (?) Pompeii

A fragment of unknown origin preserved in Naples (MN 9102) shows two dwarves in a boat full of amphorae. The painting could have a Nilotic background: both dwarves and amphorae are frequently occuring elements in Nilotic scenes. A corresponding piece from the same context is now lost.

Reinach 1922, 161-1; *Whitehouse 1977*, 61 n. 35; *Cappel 1994*, sv. W28 and W29.

North Africa

24 Carthago

A mosaic from the beginning of the fourth century AD (Bardo Museum, Tunis) shows Venus crowning herself, seated on a throne on the water, with on either side a boat with three dancing and music-making dwarves.

Yacoub 1995, 348, fig. 174.

25 Carthago, Maison des Chevaux

This house has been named after a mosaic, found in 1960 and published by Salomonson, which decorated the floor of an oecus and showed in the central part a large number of different depictions of racehorses while sometimes also portraying their owners. The frieze surrounding this central part, of which only fragments have been preserved, shows a parody of the battle of Roman *venatores* against wild animals: depicted are hunting putti battling birds, hares and other animals among lush vegetation. This kind of representations (others have also been preserved in North Africa) seems partly to derive from the Nilotic scenes showing dwarves and pygmies fighting Nilotic fauna, as in this case where many waterbirds and even an Egyptian goose are depicted. However, lotuses or other Egyptian features are lacking. A mosaic decorating a fountain in the same complex also suggests a Nilotic background: two putti are depicted, each in a boat; apart from the normal marine animals, there are also flowers, amongst them a lotus, and a duck depicted in the water surrounding them.

J.W. Salomonson, *La mosaïque aux chevaux de l'antiquarium de Carthage* (1965) esp. 32-48 (oecus) and 19-24 (fountain).

26 Carthago, ?

Fragments of a mosaic from Carthago in the Bardo Museum (A 196) show children as hunters fighting large birds amidst vegetation. Specific Nilotic elements are lacking.

Salomonson 1965 (supra), 35.

27 Carthago, ?

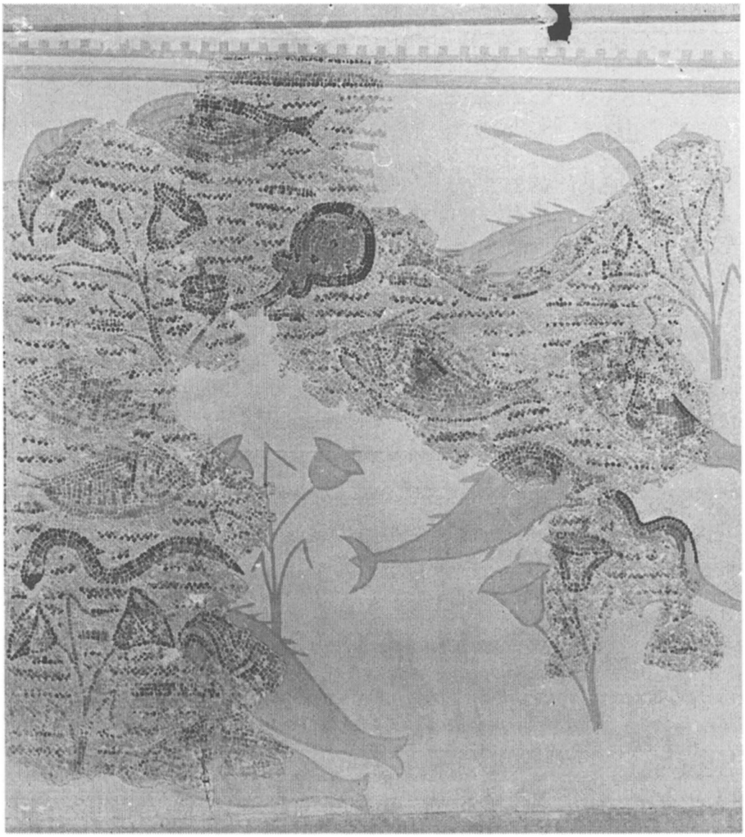
Also in the Bardo Museum (A 190) are fragments of what must have been the surrounding frieze of a large mosaic. Small people (it is not clear whether it concerns children, dwarves or putti) are hunting animals in a marsh, amongst them large birds. Again Egyptian features are lacking.

Unpublished.

28 Carthago, ?

In the reserves of the Bardo Museum is an only fragmentarily preserved mosaic from Carthago showing a waterscape with different marine animals and huge lotus plants (A 338, measuring 190 x 200). The little known mosaic shows a combination of the two best known waterscapes in the North African provinces of the Empire: marine scenes and Nilotic scenes.

J. Renault, *Cahiers d'archéologie tunisienne*, III (1910) 99; *Catalogue des musées et collections archéologiques de l'Algérie et de la Tunisie. Musée Alaoui* (2e supplément, 1922) 4 sv. 338 (A. Merlin).



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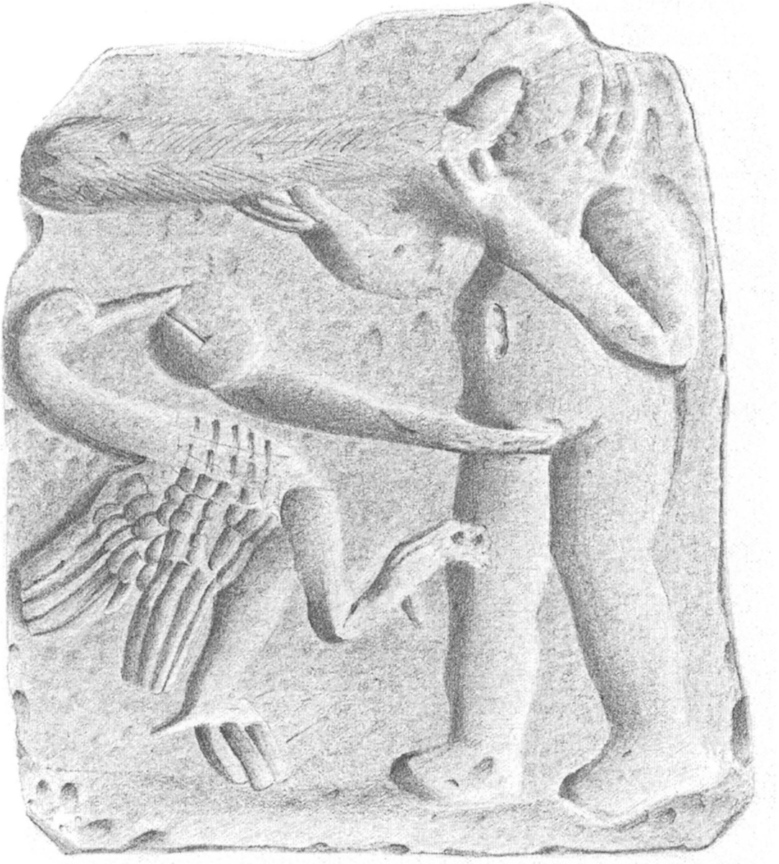
29 El Djem

A relief from El Djem (Bardo Museum, Tunis, 2513) shows the Nilotic theme of the battle between pygmies and cranes in a comic way: a crane attacks a pygmy by pecking his enormous phallus. The pygmy has a lump on his lower abdomen and holds the phallus with both hands. See no. 054 of this appendix for a similar picture.



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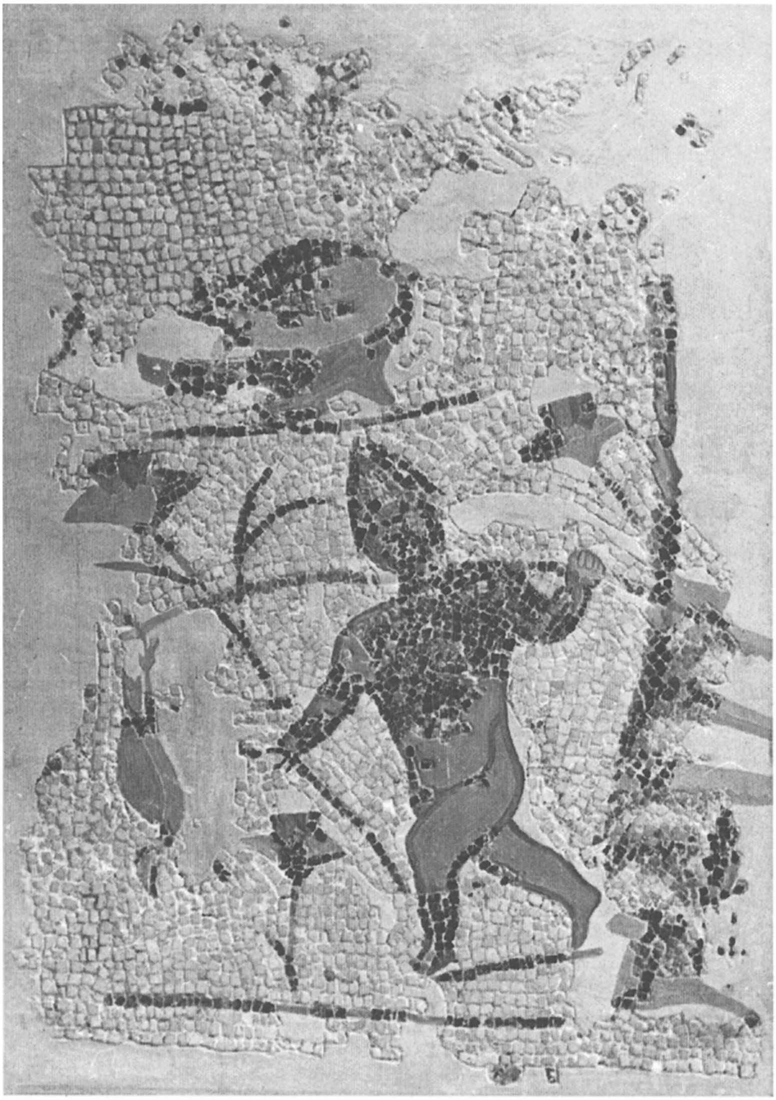
30 ?

In the reserves of the Bardo Museum in Tunis is a fragmentarily preserved mosaic fragment which probably showed a dwarf among lotus flowers. Perhaps the pygmy was indeed depicted with a carrying stick with netted ducks over his shoulder, as the drawn reconstruction suggests. There are parallels for such a depiction in a Nilotic context (cf. for instance cat. no. 005).

Unpublished.



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31 ?

A North African pottery fragment of further unknown origin (Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum, Mainz, 0.40800, former col. Salomonson) shows part of the decoration of the bowl: the stern of a ship with dancing pygmies

Pekáry 1999, 34 sv. Dm-74.

32 ?

Also from North Africa comes a well preserved terra sigillata cup with applique dated to the 4th century AD (Römisch-Germanisches Museum, Köln, KL 551). The decoration shows a boat with a seated Isis as well as the Apis bull; on the front deck two people make music with a double hoboe and a rattle. In the water two large fish are depicted.

Aurea Roma, 517-518, sv. no. 145 (with previous literature).

Egypt

33 Thmuis

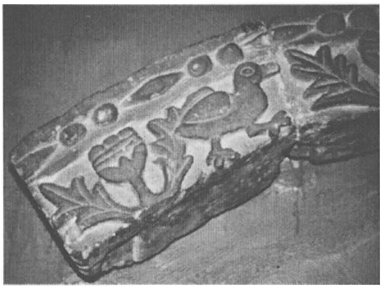
In Thmuis and the Mendes region was found an intruiguing group of limestone sacrificial tables, dating to the second and third centuries AD. The example from Thmuis depicts a zoomorphic deity, probably a crocodile, while a bird is pictured pecking at a lotus pod. Nilotic motifs are also abundant on the other examples.

E. Breccia, *Le Musée Gréco-Romain* 1931-1932 (1933) pl. VIII, fig. 30; *Kenchreai* 131; V.A. Hibbs, *The Mendes Maze. A libation table for the inundation of the Nile (II-III AD)* (dissertation NY University, 1985).

34

In Coptic Egypt Nilotic motifs occur frequently. Sometimes these are actually Nilotic landscapes, as in a relief in the church of the S. Catherine monastry (Sinaï) where the well-known motif of a cow devoured by a crocodile is depicted (see *Alföldi-Rosenbaum 1975*). Also a wooden frieze in a church dating to the 4th or 5th century AD would show Nilotic scenes (see L. Keimer, *BullInstÉg* 28 (1946), non vidi). In most cases, however, we can only speak of decorative motifs, as is witnessed by a sculpted frieze preserved in the collections of the Coptic Museum in Cairo and as in the case of the large amount of Coptic textiles with Nilotic themes and motifs. This interesting material will not be further discussed here, see for examples and discussions:

P. du Bourget, *Musée national du Louvre. Catalogue des étoffes coptes* (1964) 115 sv. C 76-77, 177-178 sv. D 153-157, 204 sv. E 45, 257 sv. E 58, 297 sv. F 140-141, 303 sv. F 154, 397 sv. G 146 and 406 sv. G 176; *Jentel 1982*, 443 ff.; M. Flury-Lemberg, Ein spätantikes Seidengewebe mit Nilszene, *Zeitschrift für Schweizerische Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte* 44 (1987) 9-15 and A. Lorquin, *Les tissus coptes au Musée National du Moyen Age, Thermes de Cluny* (1992) 69-70 sv. 7.



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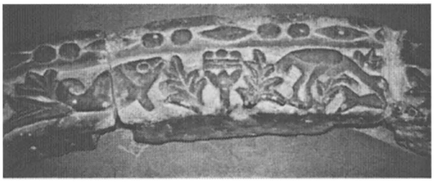

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European provinces

35 Constanza

From Constanza comes a remarkable fourth century AD relief showing Nilotic elements.

G. Bordenache, Un documento tardo di sincretismo pagano, *StClas* 10 (1968) 177-183.

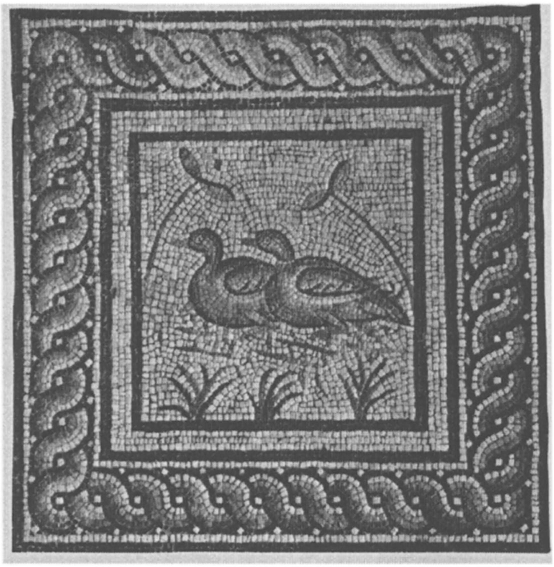
36 Germania

On a pyxis that formed part of the so-called Trierer Domschatz (Museum Wiesbaden, 7865, AD 500-600) a symposion is depicted with five persons sitting on a triclinium. From both sides a young man, one holding a plate the other an amphora, approaches. Another scene shows a woman reclining on a sphinx and the Nile god with a cornucopiae in his hand. They are surrounded by putti, while the river Nile itself, with large lotus flowers and a crocodile, is also indicated.

H. Brandenburg (ed.), *Spätantike und frühes Christentum* (exhibition catalogue 1983) 526-527 sv. no. 135 (with further references).

37 Nimes

In the collections of the Musée archéologique in Nimes is a mosaic emblema showing two ducks between what seem to be lotus flowers.



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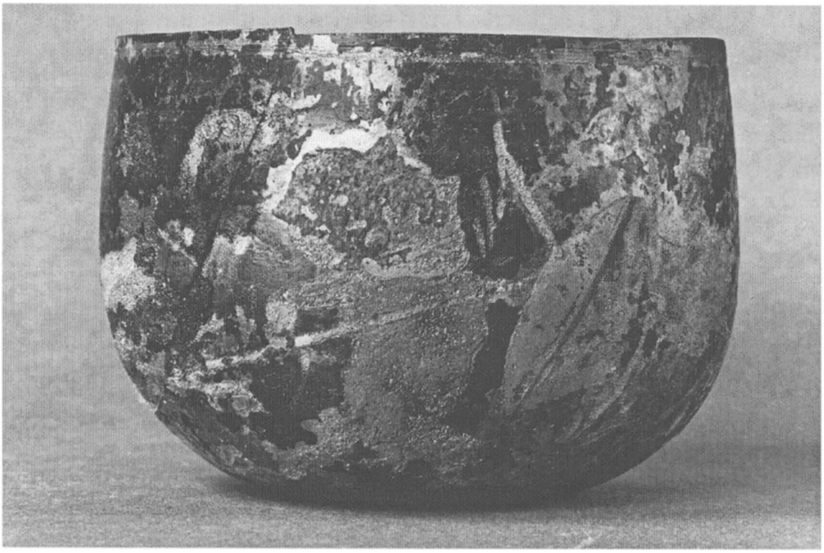
38 Nimes

A globular beaker of green glass, found in Nimes in 1858 (Louvre, Paris, S 2473), shows four cranes fighting two pygmies. The dwarves are naked and depicted as soldiers with helmets, spears and shields. In a marshy environment they are defending themselves against birds which are as big as they are. The colours have flaked off for the greater part, but some remains of red and yellow are still visible. The representation is detailed and of high quality (figure on page 473).

A. Kisa, *Das Glas im Altertum* (1908) 815 and 840-841.

39 Pannonia, villa Nemesvámos Balácaputa

Paintings with possible Nilotic elements have been preserved in two rooms of this Roman villa: the so-called gelblila-Zimmer and a triclinium dating to the end of the first century AD. It concerns marsh scenes with birds, decorating the socle of the wall.



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B. Thomas (ed.), *Römische Villen in Panonien* (1964) 73-107, 98-99.

40 Vindonissa

A carneol ringstone with the representation of a hippopotamus among papyrus plants and lotuses has been preserved in Vindonissa.

V. von Gonzenbach, *Zeitschrift für Schweizerische Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte* 9 (1952) 72 sv. no. 29, taf. 28f.

Near East

41 Asia Minor, Ayas

A floor mosaic in the apse of a small church, built within a pagan temple in Ayas in West Cicilia and dating to the end of the fifth century AD, shows amongst other things large lotus plants, waterbirds and fishes.

L. Budde, *Antike Mosaiken in Kilikien* (1969) fig. 186, 188; M. Gough, *The early Christians* (1963) pl. 69.

42 Syria, Antiochia

From an unknown context on the property of Rassim Bey Adali near Daphne comes a rectangular geometric floor mosaic that originally consisted of twelve square panels showing figurative scenes. Eight panels have been preserved. They can be dated in the period AD 400-600. All pictures show ducks or fishes swimming among large lotus flowers.

Antioch-on-the-Orontes, II. *The excavations of 1933-1936* (1938) 204 sv. no. 101; *Levi 1947*, 349; *Balty 1984*, 829.

43 Syria, Osrhoène (Halawé)

A mosaic from an unknown context, which can be dated between AD 400-600, shows fishes, a long-legged bird and waterplants.

Balty 1984, 830 n. 21.

44 Syria, Osrhoène (Sarrin)

The four sides of a peristyle of an otherwise unknown building in Sarrin were decorated with six mythological scenes, amongst them Dionysos and his thiasos. The borders contain scrolls with hunters, as well as Nilotic motifs. The mosaic can probably be dated in the period around AD 550, which makes it a parallel to the sixth century AD Nilotic mosaic from Sepphoris (cat. no. 130).

J. Balty, *La mosaïque de Sarrin (Osrhoène)* (1990); K.D. Dunbabin, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman world* (1999) 184-185.

45 Syria, Quamhané

The floor of the nave of the church of St. John the Baptist is decorated with a mosaic from around AD 500 showing animals amidst vegetation. Around this central part, emblema are depicted some of which show Nilotic elements.

Balty 1984, 830; *Donceel-Voûte 1988*, 192-201.

46 Syria, Tell Hauwash

An oblong mosaic (AD 400-600) from an unknown context shows fishes, snakes and ducks among lotus flowers.

Balty 1984, 830.

47 Phoenicia, Zahrani

A mosaic from a side room of a church in Zahrani, near Sidon, which can be dated by an inscription to AD 524, shows Nilotic elements.

M. Chehab, Mosaiques du Liban, *BullMusBeyrouth* XIV (1957) 95; *Balty 1984*, 830; *Donceel-Voûte 1988*, 424-439.

48 Palaestina, Amwas/Emmaus (Nicopolis)

A mosaic (AD 400-600, in situ), from the remains of what was probably a Roman villa, shows a bird's nest with two birds on a large lotus flower. On the left another bird is sitting between lotuses.

L.E. Vincent, Autour du groupe monumental d'Amwas, *Rbibl* XLV (1936) 403-415, 408; *Levi 1947*, 466 n. 260; *Balty 1984*, 830; *Israel*, 385-387 sv. Emmaus (M. Avi-Yonah).

49 Palaestina, Geras (Gerasa)

In the church of St. John the Baptist is still in situ a topographic mosaic with a depiction of Egypt and the Nile, which can be dated between AD 529 and 533. The church has a round plan, with a square presbyterium in the middle. Between this square and the surrounding wall, fragments have been preserved of three mosaics that decorated the three semicircular parts. On the south side the city of Memphis was depicted: a small fragment shows a city next to the river, while in front a walking man is leading a mule. Of the west semicircle only a fragment remains, while on the north side one can see the city of Alexandria, recognisable by the Pharos on the left and the Greek inscription above. Next to Alexandria another city with a shrine is depicted. This could be Canopus, where a sanctuary of the saints John and Cyrus existed in nearby Menuthis. The area between the two cities has been damaged, only the tops of palms and other trees are still visible. The right side of the mosaic has not been preserved. The lower part of the representation shows a river landscape with ducks, fishes, etc.

H. Pierce, R. Tylor, *L'art byzantin* 2 (1934) 108; C.H. Kraeling, *Gerasa. City of the decapolis* (1938) 297-308 (M. Biebel, Mosaics); W. Crawfoot, *Early churches in Palestine* (1941) 96-99, 128-132; *Balty 1984*, 829; *Piccirillo 1993*, 288; *Israel*, 476-477 sv. Gerasa/Churches of Saint John etc.

50 Palaestina, Kéfar Kama

On a fragment of a mosaic (AD 400-600) from the church of S.Tecla flowers, among them a lotus flower, are visible, as well as a duck and a fish.

B. Bagatti, *Antichi villaggi cristiani di Galilea* (1971) 277; *Balty 1984*, 830.

51 Palaestina, Khirbet Asida

On a fragment of a mosaic from an unknown context, still in situ and to be dated between AD 400-600, a lotus flower with a bird's nest is depicted.

D.C. Baramki, M. Avi-Yonah, *QDAP* 3 (1934) 17 ff.; *Balty 1984*, 830; *Israel*, 309 sv. Khirbet Asida.

52 Palaestina, Khirbet el-Mukhayyat (Nebo)

In the church of Lot and Procopius mosaic panels showing Nilotic subjects, which can be dated around AD 557, are placed between the columns of the nave. A total of five panels has been preserved, two of which show Nilotic elements. Between columns 3 and 5 two capricorns are depicted: animals half sheep half fish. Next to these a large lotus or papyrus is growing. A duck is sitting on one of the buds. Between columns 2 and 4 one can distinguish in the upper part of the picture ducks and geese swimming to the left, where they encounter two flamingoes. The lower part shows fishes, while in the background water and lotuses are depicted.

J.B. Saller, B. Bagatti, *The town of Nebo (Khirbet el-Mekhayyat) with a brief survey of other Christian monuments in Transjordan* (1949) 63-66, 131-134; *Balty 1984*, 829; M. Piccirillo, *Chiese e mosaici di Madaba* (1989) pl. 328f; *Piccirillo 1993*, 164-165; *Israel*, 1111-1113 sv. Nebo, mount/ Church of the saints and martyrs Lot and Procopius (with further previous literature).

53 Cyprus, Salamis

The painting (in situ, AD 500-600) has the form of a frieze and decorates a water cistern. Ducks and fishes are depicted among waterplants. Some lotuses can clearly be distinguished.

M. Bardswell, G. Sotirou, The byzantine paintings in the water cistern, Salamis, Cyprus, *AntJ* 19,4 (1939) 443-445; M.A. Sacopoulo, La fresque chrétienne la plus ancienne de Chypre, *CArch* 13 (1963) 61-83; *Balty 1984*, 833-834.

54 Unknown

From unknown provenance and now in a private collection is a 3rd or 4th century AD mosaic showing a large bird trying to pick a pygmy in his phallus. The not understandable inscription probably also mentions the name of the dwarf: *kopras*. Landscape elements are absent, the picture however undoubtedly has a Nilotic background.

SEG 47 (2000) sv. 2226.

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